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# LONGMANS' ENGLISH CLASSICS

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LORD MACAULAY

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LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

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Longmans' English Classics

MACAULAY'S  
LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

EDITED

WITH NOTES AND AN INTRODUCTION

BY

HUBER GRAY BUEHLER, M.A.

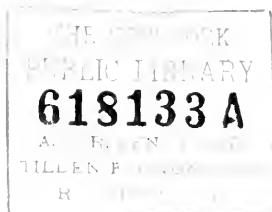
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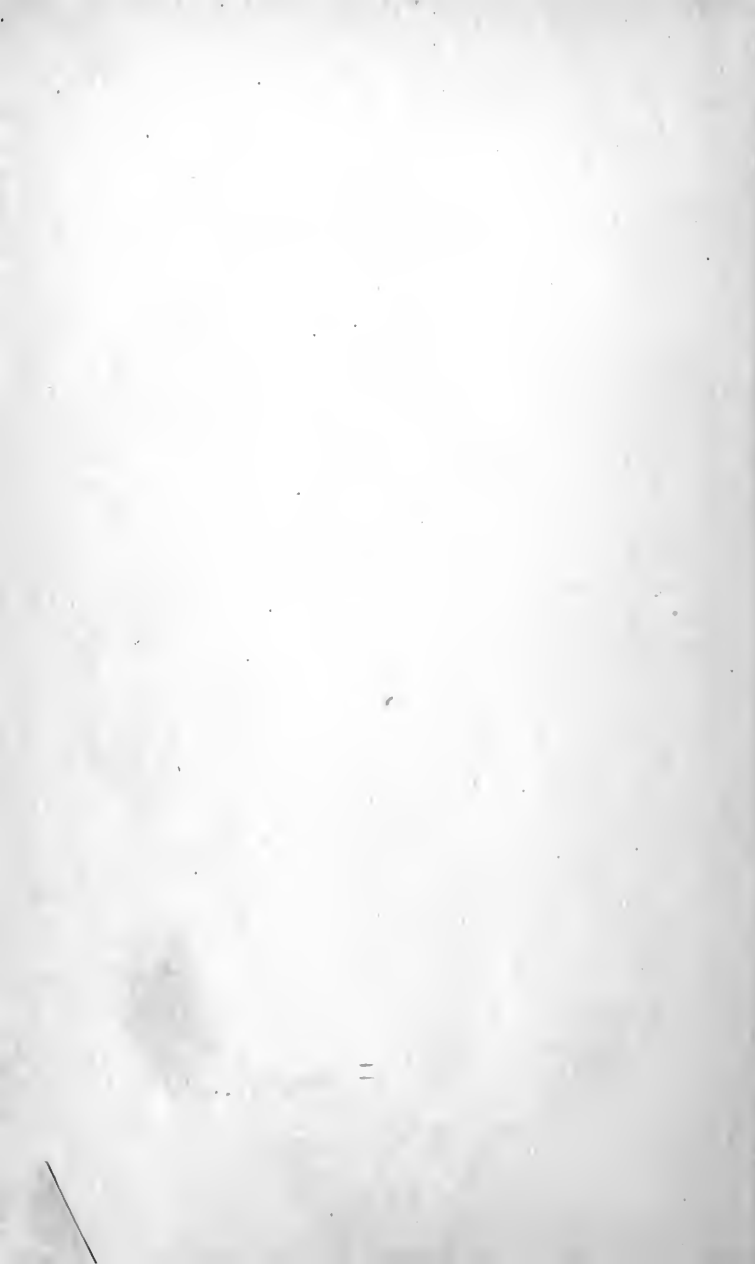
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# INTRODUCTION

## I. MACAULAY'S LIFE AND WORKS.<sup>1</sup>

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY, the most popular English essayist of the nineteenth century, and also a distinguished orator, statesman, and historian, was born in Leicestershire, England, October 25, 1800; the years of his life therefore coincide with those of the century. He was descended on his father's side from Scotch Presbyterians; on his mother's side, from a Quaker family; and to his earnest and accomplished parents he owed many admirable traits of character. His father, a silent, austere, pious man, was a leader in the Society for the Abolition of Slavery; edited the newspaper of the Abolitionist Society; and numbered among his intimate friends, who often met round his table and discussed in the presence of his children the right and wrong of great political ques-

<sup>1</sup>The *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, by his nephew, G. Otto Trevelyan, is one of the best biographies ever written; and all who can should make their acquaintance with Macaulay's career from the pages of that fascinating work. Unlike some standard books, it is interesting and inspiring to young readers as well as to old, and it should be put within reach of all students of Macaulay's writings. The best short life of Macaulay is that by J. Cotter Morrison in the English Men of Letters Series. Mr. Morrison's book, which costs little, contains only six chapters, of which three are biographical and three critical; the biographical chapters can be read by themselves in two or three hours. Those who cannot read the charming *Life and Letters* should by all means read Mr. Morrison's little book. The sketch of Macaulay's life here given is only for those who cannot do even that.

tions, the distinguished philanthropist William Wilberforce, who did more than any other man to secure the abolition of the slave trade.

Macaulay's mother, to whom he perhaps owed more than to his father, was, according to Mr. Morrison, "a woman of warm-hearted and affectionate temper, yet clear-headed and firm withal, and with a good eye for the influences which go to the formation of character." When, for instance, her son, who liked to read at home better than to study at school, declared the weather to be too bad to "go to school to-day," his mother would say: "No, Tom; if it rains cats and dogs you shall go." When he brought to her—as he often did—childish compositions in prose and verse that were, as Miss Hannah More said, "quite extraordinary for such a baby," she refrained from expressions of surprise which might have made him vain, and appeared to take as a matter of course his remarkable performances, which secretly astonished and delighted her. Yet, when he fell ill, she nursed him with a loving tenderness that he remembered all his life. Nothing indicates Mrs. Macaulay's influence over her son better than a letter which she wrote to him when he was a boy at school:—

CLAPHAM, *May* 28, 1813.

My dear Tom: I am very happy to hear that you have so far advanced in your different prize exercises, and with such little fatigue. I know you write with great ease to yourself, and would rather write ten poems than prune one; but remember that excellence is not attained at first. All your pieces are much mended after a little reflection, and therefore take some solitary walks, and think over each separate thing. Spare no time or trouble to render each piece as perfect as you can, and then leave the event without one anxious thought. I have always admired a saying of one of the old heathen philosophers. When a friend was condoling with him that he so well deserved of the gods, and yet that they did not shower their favors on

him, as on some others less worthy, he answered, "I will, however, continue to deserve well of them." So do you, my dearest. Do your best, because it is the will of God you should improve every faculty to the utmost now, and strengthen the powers of your mind by exercise, and then in future you will be better enabled to glorify God with all your powers and talents, be they of a more humble or higher order, and you shall not fail to be received into everlasting habitations, with the applauding voice of your Saviour, "Well done, good and faithful servant." You see how ambitious your mother is. She must have the wisdom of her son acknowledged before angels and an assembled world. My wishes can soar no higher, and they can be content with nothing less for any of my children. The first time I saw your face, I repeated those beautiful lines of Watts's cradle hymn:

Mayst thou live to know and fear Him,  
Trust and love Him all thy days,  
Then go and dwell forever near Him,  
See His face, and sing His praise;

and this is the substance of all my prayers for you. In less than a month you and I shall, I trust, be rambling over the Common, which now looks quite beautiful.

I am ever, my dear Tom, your affectionate mother,

SELINA MACAULAY.

Under the care of these plain-living, high-thinking parents, Macaulay passed a happy childhood. From the time that he was three years old, he gave proof of a remarkable literary faculty. He read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire, with his book on the floor, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. He did not care for toys, but was very fond of taking his walk, when he would hold forth to his companion, whether nurse or mother, telling interminable stories out of his head, or repeating what he had been reading. Before he was eight years old he wrote for his own amusement a "Compendium of Universal History," which filled about a quire of paper

and gave a tolerably connected view of leading events from the Creation to 1800. Among his many other literary ventures at this time was a poem in the style of Sir Walter Scott, which was suggested by his delight in reading the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" and "Marmion." This stanza is a specimen of the style of the eight-year-old poet:—

"Day set on Cambria's hills supreme,  
And, Menai, on thy silver stream.  
The star of day had reached the west.  
Now in the main it sunk to rest.  
Shone great Eleindyn's castle tall:  
Shone every battery, every hall:  
Shone all fair Mona's verdant plain;  
But chiefly shone the foaming main."

These productions of Macaulay's childhood—histories, epic poems, hymns—though correct in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, were dashed off at headlong speed.

At the age of twelve the precocious boy was sent to an excellent small school at Shelford, near Cambridge, where he was painfully homesick, but where, in an atmosphere pervaded with the influence of the neighboring university, he laid the foundations of his scholarship. No school-boy should omit to read Macaulay's letters home during this period; for nowhere else are some of the characteristics of this remarkable man so clearly seen as in the letters and exercises of his school and college days. In athletic games he was not expert; his life was absorbed in books, though not always in schoolbooks. His favorite reading throughout life was poetry and prose fiction, and at school he often indulged this excessive fondness for pleasant reading to the neglect of more bracing studies. He especially disliked mathematics and the exact sciences, writing to his mother: "Oh for words to express my abomination of



that science [mathematics]. . . . Discipline of the mind! Say rather starvation, confinement, torture, annihilation!" Macaulay lived to change his mind and deeply regret this mistake of his school-days. Many years afterward he wrote: "I often regret, and even acutely, my want of a senior wrangler's,<sup>1</sup> knowledge of physics and mathematics; and I regret still more some habits of mind which a senior wrangler is pretty certain to possess." In fact, the grave consequences of young Macaulay's one-sided inclination for literature can be traced throughout his career. Poetry, history, and fiction, read fast and chiefly for pleasure's sake, were very poor discipline for a mind in which fancy and imagination were already strong; and some faculties of Macaulay's mind, for want of proper exercise, remained always weak. Critics point out, even in his best writings, a "want of philosophic grasp," a "dislike of arduous speculation," a "superficial treatment of intellectual problems."

From the little school at Shelford, Macaulay went, in 1818, to Trinity College, Cambridge. He failed to secure the highest university honors because of his repugnance to mathematics; but he showed his classical and literary attainments by taking the prize for Latin declamation, by twice gaining the chancellor's medal for English verse, and by winning a scholarship. In the Union Debating Society he soon distinguished himself as one of the best debaters in the university, and in Cambridge social circles he became known as one of the most brilliant conversers in England. Day or night he was always ready to talk, and such talk! "Never were such torrents of good talk as burst and sputtered over from Macaulay and Hallam." "The greatest marvel about him is the quantity of trash he remembers." "Macaulay's flow of talk never ceased

<sup>1</sup> "Senior Wrangler" is the name given to the student who ranks first in the honor list at Cambridge University.

once during the four hours." These are extracts from the journals of some who heard him.

But it was not only "trash" that Macaulay remembered, for he seems to have remembered nearly everything he read, often getting by heart long passages that pleased him merely from his delight in reading them over. When a child he once accompanied his father on an afternoon call, and found on the table a copy of Scott's "*Lay of the Last Minstrel*," which he had not seen before. He kept himself quiet with his prize while the elders were talking, and when he returned home, sitting down on his mother's bed, he repeated to her canto after canto. When he was fifty-seven years old he learned by heart in two hours the fourth act of the "*Merchant of Venice*," except a hundred and fifty lines, which he already knew. He once said that if all copies of "*Paradise Lost*" and "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" should be destroyed, he could reproduce them from memory. This extraordinary memory remained with Macaulay to the last, and is the wonder and despair of his readers. It is the more remarkable because he read very rapidly. "He read books faster than other people skimmed them, and skimmed them as fast as any one else could turn the leaves." And he read omnivorously. Except when he was talking, writing, or engaged in public business, he hardly passed a waking hour without a book before him. Speaking of a journey from England to Ireland, he says, "As I could not read, I used an excellent substitute for reading. I went through '*Paradise Lost*,' in my head." Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, English—it was all one. The following is a list of the books he went through in the original language while on a voyage to India at the age of thirty-four: Homer's "*Iliad*" and "*Odyssey*;" Virgil's "*Æneid*," "*Eclogues*," and "*Georgics*;" Horace's poems; Cæsar's "*Commentaries*;" Bacon's "*De Augmentis*;" the works of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto,

and Tasso; "Don Quixote;" Gibbon's "Rome;" Mill's "India;" all the seventy volumes of Voltaire; Sismondi's "History of France;" and seven large volumes of the "Biographia Britannica."

Macaulay's wonderful memory was a most useful endowment; but his habit of incessant and omnivorous reading was something of a defect. Emerson remarks that the means by which the soul attains its highest development are books, travel, society, solitude; the first three Macaulay used, but solitude he neglected. (He never gave himself time *to think* hard and deeply.) Remarkable as his writings are, they would have been still more valuable, perhaps, if he had read less and reflected more. His brilliant works sometimes lack meditation and thoughtfulness.

After his graduation from Trinity (1822) Macaulay remained at Cambridge, pursuing post-graduate studies for the degree of Master of Arts, and in 1824, after an examination in which he stood first among the candidates, he was elected a Fellow of Trinity College, that is, one of the sixty masters of the college, with an income of \$1,500 a year for seven years. In 1826 he was, as the English say, called to the Bar; but he did not take kindly to the law, got little or no practice, and soon laid aside his law books to devote himself exclusively to literature and politics.

In literature he had become distinguished even before he left Cambridge, partly by his college essays and poems, but more by his contributions, when a Bachelor of Arts, to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*. Of these contributions, two battle poems, "Ivry" and "Naseby," are still read with pleasure. "Fragments of a Roman Tale" and "Scenes from the Athenian Revels"—attempts to picture the private life of bygone days—suggest that Macaulay might have written admirable historical novels. The "Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr.

John Milton," which was his own favorite among his early writings, is, in the minds of many, superior in style and diction to anything that he wrote in later life. But Macaulay's real literary fame began in 1825, when he wrote his first essay for the *Edinburgh Review*. This famous *Review* was at that time the leading periodical in Great Britain, and exerted a literary and political influence never equalled before or since. To be admitted to its pages was the highest compliment that could be paid a young writer, and Macaulay was invited to write for it. His first contribution was the celebrated "Essay on Milton."<sup>1</sup> As criticism, this Essay has little value, for Macaulay was never a subtle or profound critic, capable of analyzing and exhibiting the beauties of literary masterpieces; but as a piece of writing it is extraordinary, and it at once arrested the attention of the public. Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, wrote: "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." Murray, the publisher, declared that it would be worth the copyright of Byron's "Childe Harold" to have the writer on the staff of the *Quarterly Review*, the Tory rival of the *Edinburgh*. The Macaulay breakfast table was covered with cards from the most distinguished personages in London society, inviting the brilliant young essayist to dinner. He was courted and admired by the most distinguished persons of the day, and from that time on was one of the "lions" of London society; for London soon discovered what Cambridge knew before, that he was one of the most entertaining conversers in the world.

The "Essay on Milton" was but the beginning of a long series of more than forty articles—critical, historical, and controversial—which were contributed during the next twenty years to the *Edinburgh Review*, and made their author the best known essayist of the nineteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Croswell's edition of the *Essay on Milton* in this series.

The last *Review* article was the "Essay on the Earl of Chatham," published in 1844.

But these famous essays, so far from being Macaulay's main occupation, were, in fact, struck off in hastily snatched moments of leisure—some of them before breakfast—by a man whose time was chiefly occupied with the business of Parliament or various departments of the Government; for Macaulay was early drawn into public life, and in politics won immense distinction when he was still a young man. Mr. Gladstone declares that "except the second Pitt and Lord Byron, no Englishman had ever won, at so early an age, such wide and honorable renown." After two years' service as a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, he became, in 1830, a member of Parliament, through the friendliness of a nobleman who controlled the membership for Calne. This was just at the beginning of the great struggle to reform the representation in the House of Commons, and Macaulay plunged at once into the heat of battle. His very first speech in favor of the Reform Bill (1831) placed him in the front rank of orators. The Speaker sent for him and told him that he had never seen the House in such a state of excitement. Thereafter, whenever he rose to speak in Parliament, the remark, "Macaulay is up," running through the lobbies and committee rooms, was the signal for a general rush to hear him. Mr. Morrison thinks that "it may well be questioned whether Macaulay was so well endowed for any career as that of a great orator."

The young Whig soon became an important member of his party, filling some important offices, and distinguishing himself by hard work and high-minded, unselfish devotion for the public good. He once voted for a measure that took away his own office; at another time he resigned his government position, rather than hurt his father's feelings by helping to support a compromise Slavery Bill

which his father did not approve. All this time he was a comparatively poor man. When he first went to college his father believed himself to be worth \$500,000; but interest in public matters had led Mr. Macaulay to neglect his private business; and, while the son was still at Cambridge, money troubles began to throw their shadow on the family. Macaulay received the news bravely; while waiting for his fellowship, took private pupils to relieve his father of the burden of his expenses; devoted his income thereafter to providing for his sisters and paying off his father's debts, and, hardest of all, did it with a cheerful good humor that brought sunshine again to the home. One of his sisters says that those who did not know him during those dark days "never knew him in his most brilliant, witty, and fertile vein." His fellowship of \$1,500 was very useful to him, but it expired in 1831; his political office was swept away by a change of ministry; he could not possibly make more than \$1,000 a year by writing; and while he was winning fame in Parliament he was reduced to such straits that he had to sell a gold medal he had won at Cambridge. When, therefore, in 1834, the post of legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India was offered him, with a salary from which he could in a few years save \$100,000, he accepted, and sailed for India.

In India Macaulay spent several years of hard work. Besides his regular official duties, he accepted the chairmanships of the Committee of Public Instruction and the Committee to draw up two new Codes of Laws for the country; and in both these committees he rendered services whose good effect remains to this day. Among other things he helped to introduce the study of European literature and science among the natives of India. Meanwhile he wrote a few essays for the *Review*, and read prodigiously.

In 1838 he returned to England. He was at once re-

elected to Parliament as member for Edinburgh, and for the next ten years he was a prominent figure in the House of Commons and held important offices, two of them cabinet offices. But from the time of his sojourn in India, his interest in politics visibly declined, and after 1848 he seldom appeared in public life.

That which allured Macaulay from politics was his famous "History of England from the Accession of James II.," which engrossed most of his time and thought during the last twenty years of his life. This "History" is "undoubtedly the most brilliant and the most popular history ever written."<sup>1</sup> The work is in five volumes, and covers a period of only seventeen years; but probably it has been more widely read than any other history in the English language. It shows vast research, extraordinary power of narrative, and an unrivalled splendor of style. It has, of course, certain faults; but with these we are not now concerned. The first two volumes appeared in 1848, and took England and America by storm. The third and fourth volumes were published in 1855. The fifth volume, unfinished, was published after the death of the author. Within a generation of its first appearance, one hundred and forty thousand copies of the "History" were sold in Great Britain only. In America no other book except the Bible ever had such a sale. It was translated into German, Polish, Danish, Swedish, Hungarian, Russian, Bohemian, Italian, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Persian. In a single check Macaulay received from his English publishers, as part of his share of the proceeds, the amazing sum of \$100,000.

Two other literary works of our author remain to be noticed. "Lays of Ancient Rome"—a series of martial ballads—was published in 1842. But poetry with Macaulay was rather a recreation than a serious business, and

<sup>1</sup> C. K. Adams, *Manual of Historical Literature*, p. 463.

these stirring tales in verse, though admirable and widely popular, are not so important as his other achievements.

The last of Macaulay's writings was a group of biographical sketches, written during the later years of his life for the "Encyclopædia Britannica," after he had ceased to write for the *Review*, and while he was busy with his "History." These were the articles on Atterbury, Bunyan, Goldsmith, Doctor Johnson, and William Pitt, which are still to be found under those titles in the present (ninth) edition of the "Britannica." The "Life of William Pitt" was the last of Macaulay's writings published during his life-time. These "Lives," especially, perhaps, the "Life of Doctor Johnson," which is the subject of another volume of this series, are among the best of his works.

During his last years honors fell thick and fast on Macaulay's head. He was elected to many positions of distinction and honor, and in 1857 he was made a peer of the House of Lords—the first literary man to receive that distinction. But he never spoke in the House of Lords. For a number of years before his death his health was frail. He died at his residence, Holly Lodge, Kensington, December 28, 1859, of heart disease. Two months before, he wrote in his diary: "October 25, 1859. My birthday. I am fifty-nine years old. Well, I have had a happy life. I do not know that any one whom I have seen close has had a happier." He is buried in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Macaulay was an upright, amiable man, and his life was one of placid content and quiet happiness. "No act inconsistent with the strictest honor and integrity has ever been imputed to him."<sup>1</sup> "We cannot imagine him doing anything wrong, or even indecorous."<sup>2</sup> He enjoyed the good things of life with heartiness, yet he was strik-

<sup>1</sup> Mark Pattison.

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Morrison.



ingly unselfish, and one of the most prominent qualities revealed in his "Letters" is a sweet, affectionate tenderness for his friends. His domestic life was singularly beautiful. Even his keenest literary critics speak with admiration of his bearing towards his parents, his sisters, and his nephews and nieces. To the latter he was an ideal uncle—the "good uncle" of story books. When he died, his sister wrote: "We have lost the light of our home, the most tender, loving, generous, unselfish, devoted of friends. What he was to me for fifty years who can tell? What a world of love he poured out upon me and mine." His only domestic fault, according to his nephew, seems to have been that he did not like dogs! His very last act was to write a letter to a poor curate, enclosing a check for twenty-five pounds.

His personal appearance is thus described by his nephew, Mr. Trevelyan:

"Macaulay's outward man was never better described than in two sentences of Praed's Introduction to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*. 'There came up a short, manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power, or of great good-humor, or both, you do not regret its absence.' This picture, in which every touch is correct, tells all that there is to be told. He had a massive head, and features of a powerful and rugged cast; but so constantly lighted up by every joyful and ennobling emotion that it mattered little if, when absolutely quiescent, his face was rather homely than handsome. While conversing at table, no one thought him otherwise than good looking; but when he rose, he was seen to be short and stout in figure. . . . He at all times sat and stood straight, full, and square; and in this respect Woolner, in the fine statue at Cambridge, has missed what was undoubtedly the most marked fact in his personal appearance. He dressed badly, but not cheaply. His clothes, though ill put on, were good."

Of his manner in conversation Mr. Trevelyan says:

“Whatever fault might be found with Macaulay’s gestures as an orator, his appearance and bearing in conversation were singularly effective. Sitting bolt upright, his hands resting on the arms of his chair or folded over the handle of his walking-stick; knitting his great eyebrows if the subject was one that had to be thought out as he went along, or brightening from the forehead downwards when a burst of humor was coming; his massive features and honest glance suited well with the manly, sagacious sentiments which he set forth in his pleasant, sonorous voice, and in his racy and admirably intelligible language.”

Macaulay’s method of work is thus described by his nephew:

“The main secret of Macaulay’s success lay in this, that to extraordinary fluency and facility he united patient, minute, and persistent diligence. He well knew, as Chaucer knew before him, that

There is na workeman  
That can bothe worken wel and hastilie.  
This must be done at leisure parfaitlie.

“If his method of composition ever comes into fashion, books probably will be better, and undoubtedly will be shorter. As soon as he had got into his head all the information relating to any particular episode in his ‘History’ (such, for instance, as Argyll’s expedition to Scotland, or the attainder of Sir John Fenwick, or the calling in of the clipped coinage), he would sit down and write off the whole story at a headlong pace; sketching in the outlines under the genial and audacious impulse of a first conception; and securing in black and white each idea, and epithet, and turn of phrase, as it flowed straight from his busy brain to his rapid fingers. His manuscript, at this stage, to the eyes of any one but himself, appeared to consist of column after column of dashes and flourishes, in which a straight line with a half formed letter at each end, and another in the middle, did duty for a word. . . .

"As soon as Macaulay had finished his rough draft, he began to fill it in at the rate of six sides of foolscap every morning; written in so large a hand, and with such a multitude of erasures, that the whole six pages were, on an average, compressed in two pages of print. This portion he called his 'task,' and he was never quite easy unless he completed it daily. More he seldom sought to accomplish; for he had learned by long experience that this was as much as he could do at his best; and except when at his best, he never would work at all. . . .

"Macaulay never allowed a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it. He thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration. Whatever the worth of his labor, at any rate it was a labor of love."

Macaulay's essays may be thus conveniently classified:

1. *English History Group*.—Milton;<sup>1</sup> Hallam (one of the best); John Hampden; Burleigh and his Times (one of the weakest); Horace Walpole (unjust); William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (1834; incomplete); The Earl of Chatham (completes the story of Chatham's life); Sir James Mackintosh; Sir William Temple (one of the best); Lord Clive; Warren Hastings. (The last two are among the most famous of the essays.)

2. *Foreign History Group*.—Machiavelli; Mirabeau; War of the Succession in Spain; Von Ranke (the real subject is the "History of the Popes"; the third paragraph is widely celebrated); Frederick the Great; Barère.

3. *Controversial Group*.—Mill's Theory of Government (three essays); Saddler's Law of Population (two essays); Southey's Colloquies on Society; Gladstone on Church and State. (These controversial essays possess but little permanent interest.)

4. *Critical Group*.—John Dryden; History; Montgom-

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Croswell's edition in this series.

ery; John Bunyan (1830); Lord Byron (discusses the nature of poetry); Boswell's "Life of Johnson" (1831); Lord Bacon (the poorest of them all); Leigh Hunt (the real subject is "The Comic Dramatists of the Restoration"); Madame D'Arblay; Addison (which Thackeray calls "a magnificent statue of the great writer and moralist").

5. *Biographical Group*.—(All written for the "Encyclopædia Britannica.") Francis Atterbury; John Bunyan (1854); Oliver Goldsmith; Samuel Johnson (1856); William Pitt (son of the Earl of Chatham).

## II. MACAULAY'S STYLE AND GENIUS.

WITH Macaulay's characteristics as orator, poet, and historian we are not now concerned; for the subject of our present study brings him before us as an essayist only, in which character, perhaps, he is most widely known. His essays, of which a classified list is given above, cover a very wide range of subjects. In them Macaulay had something to say, directly or indirectly, about nearly all the important persons and events in history. For a busy man of only moderate education, who has curiosity to know a little about the great lives and great thoughts of the past, the "Essays" are as good as a library.<sup>1</sup> They are somewhat unequal in merit, those written after the author's return from India being in some respects better than those written before his departure from England; but taken as a whole they are the most famous essays ever written in English. They have been read by millions, and thousands of copies are still sold every year. If we except Shakespeare's plays and Scott's novels, they have probably done more to stimulate interest in the past than any other books. All that many persons know of history they have learned from Macaulay's "Essays." Other

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Morley.

works on the same subjects may be more profound and more exhaustive, but none are so easily understood and so readily enjoyed by the masses. As powerful, popular sketches of great subjects from history and literature, they are unrivalled; and we can easily believe the traveller in Australia who said that the three books which he found on every squatter's shelf were Shakespeare, the Bible, and Macaulay's "Essays."

An author who has thus made the history of politics and letters interesting to millions is no ordinary writer. The general public, in fact, is disposed to think that Macaulay is not only a great writer, but one of the very greatest; and it is certain that in many admirable qualities he has never been surpassed. Yet some expert judges, examining the Essays from the point of view of the highest criticism, find much fault with the judgment of the general public, and declare Macaulay to be overpraised. The fact seems to be that those who admire the Essays and those who find fault with them are thinking of different things. The inexpert masses delight in reading them because of certain admirable qualities in which they have never been excelled; expert critics, passing these admirable qualities by with hasty recognition, point to some serious shortcomings. It is the purpose of this Introduction to help the student to see both the merits and the faults of Macaulay as an essayist.

What, then, is the secret of Macaulay's astonishing popularity? As we turn his pages one of the very first things that impress us is the vast and accurate knowledge of literature and history with which his mind was evidently stored. One of the most remarkable things about Macaulay was the number of things he knew and knew well. He seems to his readers to know by heart every book that was ever written, to be acquainted with the details of every incident in history, and to have at his fingers' end every

trait and anecdote of every important person that ever lived; for, whatever his subject, he pours over it with astonishing ease a flood of illustrations, comparisons, and contrasts drawn from the literature of all languages and the history of all countries. His store of information seems inexhaustible; his prose, like Milton's poetry, is "freighted with the spoils of all ages."<sup>1</sup> Macaulay's style, it has been truly said, is before all else the style of great literary knowledge; and the ordinary reader who would follow intelligently the allusions which are scattered over almost every page of the Essays must keep his reference books constantly at his elbow. When we lay down the Essays we involuntarily ask ourselves, "Was there anything this man did not know?" As a matter of fact Macaulay knew very little about philosophy, and his books contain few reference, to the astonishing discoveries of modern natural science; but we forget these limitations in the presence of his wonderful literary and historical information. This is the first secret of his wide-spread fame. Just as we like to listen to the conversation of a well-informed person, so we like to read Macaulay's Essays, for from them we learn a great many things with very little trouble.

Another reason for Macaulay's popularity is the manner in which he conveys his knowledge to the reader. Many learned men are dull authors; Macaulay is one of the most agreeable. He had in a remarkable degree the power of pleasing by the very manner of his writing, and however dry his subject, he always contrived to write what persons like to read. The charm of a writer's style, like grace in a person's bearing, is a difficult thing to analyze and explain; it is a subtle something which we feel, though we can hardly describe it; yet some qualities of the style of this brilliant writer are so obvious that they can easily be set forth.

<sup>1</sup> Mark Pattison.

For one thing, his language is always absolutely clear. Above all things he was resolved to be understood, and it is doubtful whether he ever wrote an obscure sentence. He never for a moment leaves the reader in doubt as to what he means, and he seems to have made it his first care to write not only what could be understood, but what must be understood. He economizes our attention, as Herbert Spencer would say, by using language through which we see his ideas as we see objects through fine plate glass—without the slightest effort. Macaulay sacrificed something to gain this crystalline clearness; yet clearness is certainly the first essential of good writing.

Then, too, Macaulay's style is always lively, his tone hearty and strong. His writing has much of the rush and eloquence which belonged to his oratory, and it swings our attention along by the mere impetuosity of its movement. His learning never clogs his story or his explanation; he is always moving forward; and the reading of his pages brings much of the exhilaration that comes with all rapid motion. A great, strong man, knowing everything, and telling us many things with perfect clearness in a lively manner and a full round voice—such is Macaulay to the readers of his Essays.

These and other qualities make Macaulay one of the best story-tellers that ever lived. Others have surpassed him in intellectual depth, in moral insight, and in some other valuable qualities; but in the mere art of telling a story in a clear and interesting way, he has no rival. “He is unequalled in our time in his mastery of the art of letting us know in an express and unmistakable way exactly what it was that happened.”<sup>1</sup> His narratives, to use a common expression, “read like novels;” that is to say, by the clearness of his pictures and the vivacity of his story, he makes persons and events of the past as real and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Morley.

interesting as a skilful novelist makes the creatures of his imagination. We see a figure from the eighteenth century as vividly as if he were present, and seem to understand everything that happened as if we had been there. And so easily is all this done that the story seems to tell itself. As the reader sees and understands with perfect ease, so there is no trace of effort on the part of the author.

Macaulay, then, knew a marvellous number of interesting things, which he imparts to the reader in a most lively and attractive manner, being, in fact, one of the best story-tellers that ever lived. To these qualities which make him a favorite with the masses must be added the fact that he never perplexes his readers with deep thinking. His writings are full of strong, English common-sense; but of profound reflection and close, subtle reasoning there is no trace. Anything that would be hard for an ordinary man of business to understand is carefully avoided; everything is looked at from the point of view of the middle classes, who cannot understand philosophers, and do not care to do overmuch thinking. He deals, not in the abstract, but in the concrete. Into the higher regions of thought he never goes. His mind moves along a middle plane, where the masses can easily follow, and this is another reason why the masses like to read him.

Macaulay's want of aspiration, of all effort to rise into the higher regions of thought, has lost him the good opinion of some readers, and is the first of those shortcomings which expert critics consider grave faults. "He is one of the most entertaining, but also one of the least suggestive, of writers." He "did nothing to stir the deeper mind or the deeper feelings of his multitude of readers." "He never had anything to say on the deeper aspects and relations of life; and it would not be easy to quote a sentence from either his published works or private letters which shows insight into or meditation on love, or



marriage, or friendship, or the education of children, or religion." "His learning is confined to book lore; he is not well read in the human heart, and still less in the human spirit." "His strength lay not in thinking but in drawing." These are some of the criticisms made with perfect truth by such critics as Walter Bagehot, Cotter Morrison, Mr. John Morley, and Mr. Leslie Stephen. "Compare him with a calm, meditative, original writer like De Quincey, and you become vividly aware of his peculiar deficiency, as well as his peculiar strength; you find a more rapid succession of ideas and greater wealth of illustration, but you miss the subtle casuistry, the exact and finished similitudes, and the breaking up of routine views. No original opinion requiring patient consideration or delicate analysis is associated with the name of Macaulay. It better suited his stirring and excitable nature to apply his dazzling powers of expression and illustration to the opinions of others."<sup>2</sup>

This lack of depth in Macaulay's thinking is most noticeable, perhaps, in his sketches of character. It has been justly said that no one else describes so well the *spectacle* of a character, for Macaulay can always tell what people said, what they did, what they looked like; but he had "no eye for the deeper springs of character, the finer shades of motive."<sup>3</sup> "He can draw a most vivid portrait, so far as can be done by a picturesque accumulation of characteristic facts; but he never gets below the surface."<sup>4</sup> He can describe graphically exterior life, but his insight into men's bosoms is not deep. "Some portion of the essence of human nature is concealed from him; but all its accessories are at his command."<sup>5</sup> "Macaulay never

<sup>2</sup> Minto, *Manual of English Prose Literature*.

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Morrison.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Leslie Stephen.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Bagehot.

stops to brood over an incident or a character, with an inner eye intent on penetrating to the lowest depth of motive and cause, to the furthest complexity of impulse, calculation, and subtle incentive. The spirit of analysis is not in him. His whole mind runs in action and movement; it busies itself with eager interest in all objective particulars. He is seized by the external and the superficial, and revels in every detail that appeals to the five senses.”<sup>1</sup> “It may be noticed that the remarkable interest he often awakens in a story, which he tells so admirably, is nearly always the interest of adventure, never the interest of psychological analysis. Events and outward actions are told with incomparable clearness and vigor—but a thick curtain hangs before the inward theatre of the mind, which is never revealed on his stage.”<sup>2</sup>

Another quality which hurts Macaulay in the opinion of men who are accustomed to careful and accurate thinking, though it is another reason for his popularity with the masses, is the extreme positiveness which pervades his writings. He represents everything as absolutely certain, and “goes forward with a grand confidence” in himself, his facts, and his opinions, which is delightful to many, but displeasing to those who know how extremely uncertain just these very things are. Macaulay is a “dealer in unqualified propositions.”<sup>3</sup> However much obscurity may envelop a fact of history or a subject in literature, he “marches through the intricacies of things in a blaze of certainty.” This confident tone is partly the expression of Macaulay’s character, for he was a man of very positive convictions; but it is also, perhaps, a rhetorical quality cultivated in the interest of absolute clearness to the ordinary mind. “Eschewing high thought on the one hand, and deep feeling on the other, he marched down a middle road of resonant commonplace, quite certain that where

<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Morley.<sup>2</sup> J. C. Morrison.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Morley.

‘Bang, whang, whang, goes the drum,  
And tootle-tee-tootle the fife,’

the densest crowd, marching in time, will follow the music.”<sup>1</sup> A dense crowd has, indeed, followed Macaulay’s drum and trumpet style with great satisfaction; but persons of highly cultivated taste are disposed to stop their ears in the presence of his resounding, banging phrases. Pattison well expressed the feeling of this class of readers when he said: “He has a constant tendency to glaring colors, to strong effects, and will always be striking violent blows. He is not merely exuberant, but excessive. There is an overwhelming confidence about his tone; he expresses himself in trenchant phrases, which are like challenges to an opponent to stand up and deny them. His propositions have no qualifications. Uninstructed readers like this assurance, as they like a physician who has no doubt about their case. But a sense of distrust grows upon the more circumspect reader as he follows page after page of Macaulay’s categorical affirmations about matters which our own experience of life teaches us to be of a contingent nature. We inevitably think of a saying attributed to Lord Melbourne, ‘I wish I were as cock-sure of any one thing as Macaulay is of everything.’”<sup>2</sup>

This is what critics mean when they speak of Macaulay’s inaccuracy. It is not that his memory is at fault or that his learning is inadequate, but that the rush and the vigor of his thought lead him occasionally into sweeping assertions which are really exaggerations. His writings abound in superlative expressions; his style is marked by a wonderful vigor that sometimes overshoots the mark. When a difficult question crosses his path, he disposes of it in a dashing way with some simple, easy answer, which everyone can understand, but which more profound thinkers perceive to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is cer-

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Morrison.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

tain, however, that Macaulay was never intentionally inaccurate, and that he never knowingly called black white, or white black. He is a thoroughly honest, manly writer; and his exaggerations are only manifestations of that heartiness which was a part of his strong character.

To sum up, Macaulay, as Mr. Frederick Harrison has remarked, has led millions who read no one else, or who never read before, to know something of the past, and to enjoy reading. Let us be thankful for his energy, learning, brilliance. He is no priest, philosopher, or master; but let us delight in him as a companion. In one thing all agree—critics and the public, friends and opponents—Macaulay's was a life of purity, honor, courage, generosity, affection, and manly perseverance, almost without a stain or a defect. His was a fine, generous, honorable, and sterling nature. His books deserve their vast popularity; but Macaulay must not be judged among philosophers nor even among the greatest masters of the English language. He stands between philosophic historians and the public very much as journals and periodicals stand between the masses and great libraries. Macaulay is a glorified journalist and reviewer, who brings the matured results of scholars to the man in the street in a form that he can remember and enjoy, when he could not make use of a learned book. He performs the office of the ballad-maker or story-teller in an age before books were common. And it is largely due to the influence of his style that the best journals and periodicals of our day are written in a style so clear, so direct, so resonant.<sup>1</sup>

The technical elements of Macaulay's style can be profitably studied only in connection with the text of his writings; all discussion of such matters is therefore reserved for the Notes.

<sup>1</sup>This paragraph is based, with some changes, upon a portion of Mr. Harrison's article in *The Forum* for September, 1894.

## III. MACAULAY ON JOHNSON.

MACAULAY wrote two articles on Samuel Johnson, twenty-five years apart, and very different in character. The first appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in September, 1831, as a review of J. W. Croker's edition of "Boswell's Life of Johnson." Croker<sup>1</sup> was one of Macaulay's political opponents in the House of Commons, twenty years his senior, and a bitter personal enemy. He had ability, was Secretary to the Admiralty, and an enthusiastic student of history and literature; but he was an unamiable man, and in one of his speeches had spoken of Macaulay's orations as "vague generalities handled with that brilliant imagination which tickles the ear and amuses the fancy without satisfying the reason." The purpose and temper of Macaulay's review of Croker's edition of "Boswell," may be best learned from several passages in Macaulay's letters. Three months before Croker's book appeared, Macaulay wrote to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, "I will certainly review Croker's 'Boswell' when it comes out." One week after the book was published he wrote to his sister: "I am to review Croker's edition of Bozzy. It is wretchedly ill done. The notes are poorly written and shamefully inaccurate." A few weeks later, after making an extemporaneous speech in the House of Commons, he wrote: "I ought to tell you that Peel was very civil, and cheered me loudly; and that impudent, leering Croker congratulated the House on the proof which I had given of my readiness. . . . See whether I do not dust that varlet's jacket for him in the next number of the *Blue and Yellow*.<sup>2</sup> I detest him more than cold boiled veal."

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Miller's edition of Southey's *Life of Nelson*, in this series, p. xxi., and Southey's dedication, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The cover of the *Edinburgh Review* was dark blue, with a yellow back.

On October 17, 1831, after his article appeared, he wrote: "Croker looks across the House of Commons at me with a leer of hatred which I repay with a gracious smile of pity."

It is evident that a review inspired by this personal quarrel can have little permanent interest. The first forty paragraphs of the essay on "Boswell's Life of Johnson" treat only of Croker's edition of Boswell's celebrated book, and smack strongly of personal animosity. In them the reviewer dwells at length and with relish on certain errors in Croker's dates and genealogies, ascribing to them an exaggerated importance, and exposing them in a way to humiliate Croker and make him out a dunce. He says Croker's book is "as bad as bad could be;" maintains that the "notes absolutely swarm with misstatements;" comments in detail on the "monstrous blunders" and "scandalous inaccuracy;" and declares Croker to be "entitled to no confidence whatever." Macaulay's criticism is founded on fact, but it is unjust in tone and emphasis. A more just, though still an unfavorable, review of Croker's "Boswell" will be found in Carlyle's "Essay" on the same subject. The rest of Macaulay's "Essay on Boswell's Johnson" consists of two parts. The first treats at length of the character of Boswell, the second discusses Doctor Johnson himself. These parts of the "Essay" are marked by all the vigor and vivacity of Macaulay's early style. The eccentricities of both Boswell and Johnson are set forth with unexampled clearness and power; but combined with these brilliant qualities of style is a tendency to exaggeration, a lack of insight into character, and a superficial treatment of difficult problems, which make the "Essay" unjust to both Johnson and his satellite.

The second of Macaulay's articles on Johnson, and by far the best, is the "Life of Samuel Johnson," written in

1856 for the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*,” and retained in the present edition of that standard work. In this “*Life*,” written when his style was matured and when his resources were in all their fulness, we have Macaulay at his very best. The tone is moderate, the language is chaste, and though there is little appreciation of Johnson’s inner character, the external husk of the man is delineated in a masterly way.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

MACAULAY'S "Life of Johnson" is a sketch of the central literary figure of the eighteenth century, by one of the most accomplished literary artists of the nineteenth; both its subject-matter and its form, therefore, demand the careful attention of the student of English literature. Persons of disciplined mind and trained judgment may study both at once, but young students, with whom all reading is more or less difficult, cannot well attend to more than one thing at a time. If they are required to spend their little store of mental energy on unfamiliar words, historical and literary allusions, and still to follow the progress of the author's thought, observe his plan, and note the details of his diction, they are almost sure to do nothing well, and, even worse than that, to grow weary of literary study—a sorry outcome of a course of training the object of which is to foster love for good reading. That all things may be done well, it seems best to do one thing at a time; the notes in this volume have therefore been separated into two groups: Explanatory Notes, for use in the student's first reading, and a Critical Note, for use in later readings.

The following suggestions are offered to those who may have no better plan of their own.

I. The first step in the study of such a piece of writing as Macaulay's "Life of Samuel Johnson," is to make the acquaintance of the author. This can most satisfactorily be done from one or more of the biographies of Macaulay



mentioned below, and teachers who have time and opportunity will do well to require as supplementary reading either Trevelyan's "Life and Letters," or Mr. Morrison's brief "Life." When this is not practicable, at least as much of Macaulay's life and work as is contained in the Introduction to the present volume should be mastered by the student before he takes up the "Life of Johnson." At least one recitation period may well be used in an examination, oral or written, on the chief points in Macaulay's life, and the general merits and faults which his writing may be expected to disclose.

II. When the student has made the acquaintance of Macaulay, he is ready to begin the "Life of Johnson." Here, obviously, the first thing to do is to read the text so as to understand it; for clear understanding must come before critical appreciation. During this first reading, immature students should not be bothered with literary criticism beyond what their own taste or judgment may suggest to them. They should be left alone with Macaulay's style, just as Agassiz used to leave his pupils alone with the bit of nature which they were studying, and for much the same reason; namely, that their own critical faculties may have room for development. In order that their time may not be dissipated, and they themselves wearied and disheartened by laborious and often fruitless searches after the meaning of allusions and names the relative importance of which they do not know, a certain amount of assistance in following Macaulay's numerous references to history and literature is given in the Explanatory Notes. Macaulay wrote primarily, not for school-boys, but for readers of mature culture; and the average student in secondary schools, even after he has received the help of the Explanatory Notes, which treat only of historical and literary allusions, will find enough of difficulty remaining to occupy his time, train his own thinking faculties,

and make him familiar with the use of dictionaries and other books of reference.

This reading of the text with a view to grasping its subject-matter should be done out of class, at a rate, according to circumstances, of from four to ten pages a lesson. During the recitation period the teacher should assure himself, by examinations, oral or written, or both, that the reading has been carefully done. One good plan is to require a brief impromptu composition exercise on some subject taken from the lesson but not announced beforehand, and to follow this with a rapid fire of oral questions, not necessarily exhaustive, on the meaning of words, the persons or places mentioned in the text, and the subject-matter. That this oral questioning may be rapid, it is convenient for the teacher to underscore in red or blue in his own book the subjects which he wishes to select as tests of the pupils' work. This questioning, of course, must not be confined to the subjects treated in the notes. For instance, on page 1 of the "Life of Johnson," such questions as these might be asked: Mention some of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century. Give an account of Johnson's father. Where is Lichfield? Name the Midland counties. What is an *oracle*? The meaning here of the word *clergy*? Meaning of *churchman*? Meaning of *municipal*? Explain *the sovereigns in possession*. Meaning of *Jacobite*? Where and when was Johnson born? Mention his peculiarities as a child. Meaning of *morbid*, *propensity*, *the royal touch*? Explain the old common name for scrofula. The following are suitable topics for short written exercises: Johnson's Father; Johnson's Peculiarities as a Child; The King's Evil. Written examinations should be frequent.

After the teacher has thus quickly tested the pupil's work—and tests need not be long or exhaustive in order to be thorough—what remains of the recitation period may

be occupied with any interesting matter bearing on the general subject. Pictures may be shown, stories of Johnson may be told, reports of special investigations heard. Without any reference to published criticisms, the pupils should be encouraged to form and express opinions of their own about either Johnson's character or Macaulay's style. Whether their opinions are right or wrong matters little; the important thing is that they learn to notice, to compare, and to think for themselves. If it be necessary to correct some grave error in opinion, it should be done with great gentleness, so as not to frighten timid thinkers. If some pupils are over-forward in making up their minds, it will perhaps be enough to remind them that their present opinions cannot be regarded as final. To this part of the recitation belongs, also, the important work described in IV.

III. After the student has carefully read the text so as to master its subject-matter and to form some independent opinion of the author's style, he is ready to take up the critical study of the work, and to rectify, if need be, his first impressions. To assist in this study of form and structure, a brief Critical Note, containing a few general hints as to method, has been added to this volume. It is by no means advisable that preparatory school pupils should make anything like an elaborate study of anyone's style. Something, however, may be accomplished in leading the student to imitate the finer qualities of Macaulay's style, and to know what it is that he is doing, and how he does it. Attention should be fixed on diction, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and the arrangement of the whole composition. No books will be needed for this work, except a good treatise on rhetoric, though the teacher may be glad to consult Minto's "English Prose Writers" and Brewster's "Studies in Structure and Style."

IV. Some teachers and students may be obliged by

limitations of time or opportunity to stop here, content with a mastery of the subject-matter and some insight into the peculiarities of the author's style; but the most valuable fruit of the study of Macaulay's "Life of Johnson" yet remains to be gathered. The real opportunity of both teacher and student lies in the fact that Johnson is the central literary figure of the later eighteenth century, and that Macaulay's "Life," because of its many allusions and cross references, is one of the best starting points for a study of that interesting period in the history of English life and letters. Into that rich field the "Life of Johnson" should be the gate. Though mentioned last, this study may go along with the work described in I. and II. Subjects for special investigation should be assigned to different pupils, and compositions on them read before the class. Books, or chapters in books, may be appointed for supplementary or home reading. The student who, taking the "Life of Johnson" as a starting point, will read along the lines suggested by Macaulay's allusions, will be surprised to find how his horizon will be enlarged and his thinking be enriched. To assist in this important part of the study, a fairly full list of books has been given in the Bibliography, and a few hints for the guidance of the student have been embodied in the Critical Note.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY.

1. *Macaulay*. The authorized edition of Macaulay's Works is that edited by his sister, Lady Trevelyan, and published in eight volumes by Longmans, Green, and Co. The same publishers issue various cheap editions of the several works. The "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," 2 vols., by his nephew, Sir G. Otto Trevelyan, is the standard biography, and a most readable book. The story of Macaulay's connection with the *Edinburgh Review* may be traced

in "Selections from the Correspondence of the late Macvey Napier." The best short biography is by J. Cotter Morrison in the English Men of Letters Series. Still shorter are the articles on Macaulay in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," by Mark Pattison, and in the "Dictionary of National Biography," by Mr. Leslie Stephen. The best critical essays are by Walter Bagehot in "Literary Studies," vol. ii.; Mr. Leslie Stephen, in "Hours in a Library," vol. iii.; Mr. John Morley in "Miscellanies," vol. ii., reprinted in Brewster's "Studies in Structure and Style" (Macmillan); and J. C. Morrison in his "Life." See also W. E. Gladstone's "Gleanings of Past Years." Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature" contains a study of Macaulay's style with reference to technical rhetoric.

2. *Johnson*. The standard edition of Johnson's Works is the Oxford Classic Edition, 11 vols. "Rasselas" has been reprinted in many editions; among the best are those of Prof. F. N. Scott (Leach, Shewell, and Sanborn) and Prof. O. F. Emerson (Henry Holt and Co.). The *Rambler* and the *Idler* are separately printed in the series of "British Essayists," or may be consulted in G. B. Hill's "Select Essays of Samuel Johnson" (Macmillan). The "Vanity of Human Wishes" is in Syle's "From Milton to Tennyson;" both it and "London," are in Hales's "Longer English Poems." The "Lives of the Poets" may be had in the ten cent National Library (Cassell Publishing Co.), or in the Bohn Library, 3 vols. A selection of the "Six Chief Lives" (Milton, Dryden, Swift, Addison, Pope, and Gray) has been edited by Matthew Arnold (Macmillan; Holt). The best edition of Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is that edited by Mr. G. Birkbeck Hill (6 vols. Macmillan; Harper), a work that contains a wealth of supplementary material, and, with its admirable index, is one of the best reference books on eighteenth cen-

tury life and literature. Other editions in order of importance are Napier's, Mr. Henry Morley's (Routledge), and Croker's (Bohn). All of these contain many interesting pictures. A condensed "Boswell," "relieved from passages of obsolete interest," is published by Henry Holt and Co. Mrs. Piozzi's "Anecdotes of Doctor Johnson," first published in 1786, may be had in the cheap National Series (Cassell); but everything of importance in the "Anecdotes" is included in the notes to Hill's "Boswell." The same remark is true of Sir John Hawkins's "Life of Johnson," published in 1787. The Correspondence of Johnson and Mrs. Thrale is printed, in part, in Scoone's "Four Centuries of English Letters."

Of modern critical biographies of Johnson the best is by Mr. Leslie Stephen in the English Men of Letters Series. This keen critic is also the author of the sketch in the "Dictionary of National Biography." Lieutenant-Colonel Grant's "Johnson," in the Great Writers Series, contains a bibliography to the year 1887. Among critical studies should be mentioned Landor's "Imaginary Conversations between Samuel Johnson and John Horne Tooke;" Mr. Leslie Stephen's "Dr. Johnson's Writings" in "Hours in a Library," vol. ii.; Carlyle's "Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson," which may be regarded as a reply to Macaulay's essay on the same subject; Mr. A. Birrell's "Dr. Johnson" in "Obiter Dicta," Second Series; Mr. G. Birkbeck Hill's "Dr. Johnson, his Friends, and his Critics;" and chapters in Taine's "History of English Literature," Minto's "Manual of English Prose Literature," and Gosse's "History of Eighteenth Century Literature." For the life of Boswell, apart from Johnson, see "Boswelliana: the Commonplace Book of James Boswell" (London: 1874), and Mr. Leslie Stephen's "Boswell" in the "Dictionary of National Biography."

3. *Eighteenth Century History and Literature.* For

political history Gardiner's "Student's History of England" (Longmans) is probably the most convenient book for general use. Chapter iii. of Macaulay's "History" should be within reach; and Green's "Short History of the English People" is always valuable. Macaulay's Essays on "Horace Walpole," the "Earl of Chatham," "Madame D'Arblay," "Addison," and "Oliver Goldsmith," all treat of this period. Among special histories should be mentioned W. E. H. Lecky's "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," especially chapters iv., ix., and xxiii.; Edmund Gosse's "History of Eighteenth Century Literature" (the best sketch of the literature of the period); and Mr. Leslie Stephen's "History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century." Additional illustrations of the life of this period will be found in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*; Madame D'Arblay's "Diary and Letters" and "Early Journals;" Horace Walpole's "Letters;" Nichol's "Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century;" and Thackeray's "Lectures on the Four Georges."

4. *London*. Maps of London may be had in all sizes and styles from Rand, McNally, and Co. Baedeker's "Handbook for London," with its excellent maps and full index, is useful. For information about London of the eighteenth century see Wheatley's "London, Past and Present," 3 vols.; Hutton's "Literary Landmarks of London;" Lemon's "Up and Down the London Streets;" Hare's "Walks in London;" and Mr. Walter Besant's "London" (Harpers; published originally in *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1892).

## EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

THE following questions may be of some service to teachers and students by way of indicating possible methods of examination.

1. Show, by analysis, the grammatical structure of the last sentence in paragraph 41 (page 36). Parse *which* (36 9), *hammer* (36 12).

2. Comment in detail on the structure of the sentences in paragraph 32 (page 23). What can you say of the length of the sentences and their arrangement in the paragraph? By *party* (23 20) does Macaulay mean one or more persons?

3. Explain the meaning (and, if important for that purpose, give the derivation) of the following words: *desultory* (3 18), *ceruse* (6 31), *novice* (8 25), *ordinaries* (9 21), *alamode* (9 21), *sycophancy* (9 28), *rabbis* (13 23), *maundered* (34 8), *poetasters* (39 3), *mitigated* (43 20).

4. Explain, as fully as possible, the following references and allusions: *such an author as Thomson* (8 17); "*the Senate of Lilliput*" (10 17); *the Cupulets against the Montagues* (10 29, 30); *Grub Street* (14 26); *Drury Lane Theatre* (16 35). *This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the Tatler, and by the still more brilliant success of the Spectator* (18 5-7); *witty as Lady Mary* (20 9, 10); *Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place* (23 27-29); *Cock Lane Ghost* (26 31); *Macpherson, whose "Fingal" had been proved to be an impudent forgery* (36 4, 5).



5. Write briefly of Johnson's Dictionary and "Rasselas." To what does Johnson owe his great reputation? Why? Write briefly of Johnson's friends. Explain the difference between the political opinions of Johnson and Burke, and attempt to account for it. Mention the chief characteristics of Johnson's style. Comment on Macaulay's statement (21 30-32) that English, as Johnson wrote it, *was scarcely a Teutonic language*.

6. Give a list of the famous English authors contemporary with Johnson, and a list of such of their works as you have read in whole or in part. On what books have you chiefly depended for your knowledge of English literature in the eighteenth century? Contrast briefly "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "Rasselas." What poet of Johnson's time is most his opposite in character and genius? Why? What other famous novels besides "Rasselas" (excluding "The Vicar of Wakefield") were written in the "Johnson age" and how do they compare with "Rasselas" in method and interest?

7. What traits of Macaulay's character made him especially well fitted to appreciate Johnson's genius? How, in your opinion, does the "Life of Johnson" compare in interest with other writings of Macaulay? Has it, in your opinion, any conspicuous limitations or defects?

8. Mention any parts of the "Life" that have specially interested you or have proved particularly suggestive.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—MACAULAY.

MACAULAY'S LIFE.	MACAULAY'S WORKS.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	ENGLISH LITERATURE.	AMERICAN LITERATURE.
1800. Born.		1800. Bancroft born. Cowper died.		1800. Daniel Webster's first public speech (Hampover, July 4).
		1801. J. H. Newman born.	1802. <i>Edinburgh Review</i> founded.	
		1803. R. W. Emerson born.		
		1804. Napoleon emperor of France. Hawthorne and Disraeli born.		
		1805. Battles of Trafalgar and Ansterlitz. Bulwer born.	1805. Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel.	
		1806. Lever and Mrs. Browning born.	1806. Coleridge's Christabel.	1806. Noah Webster's Dictionary.
		1807. Longfellow and Whittier born. Abolition of the English slave trade.	1807. Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare. Moore's Irish Melodies.	
	1808. <i>Legende</i> poems, etc.		1808. Scott's <i>Marmion</i> . <i>Quarterly Review</i> founded.	
		1809. Tennyson, Gladstone, Darwin, Holmes, Poe, and Lincoln born.		1809. Irving's History of New York.
		1811. Thackeray and Wendell Phillips born.		
		1812. Dickens, Robert Browning, and Mrs. Stowe born.	1812. Byron's Child Harold, cantos i. and ii.	

1814. Sent to school at Shelford.	1815. Battle of Waterloo.	1814. Scott's Waverley. Wordsworth's Ex- cursion.	1815. <i>North American Re- view</i> founded.
	1816. Sheridan died.		1816. Drake's Culprit Fay.
	1818. Froude born.	1818. Hallam's Middle Ages. Keats's Endymion.	1817. Bryant's <i>Thalassopsis</i> .
	1819. Ruskin, Lowell, Whitman, Clough, Kingsley, and George Eliot born.		1819. Irving's Sketch Book.
1818. Entered Trinity Col- lege, Cambridge.	1820. George IV. king. Spencer and Tyn- dall born.	1820. Keats's Eve of St. Ag- nes, Lamia, and Hy- perion. Shelley's Prometheus Un- bound.	
1819. First Chancellor's Medal.		1821. De Quincey's Confes- sions.	1821. Cooper's Spy.
1821. Craven Scholarship. Second Chancellor's Medal.	1821. Keats died.	1822. Lamb's Essays of Elia.	
1822. Degree of B.A.	1822. Shelley died. Mat- thew Arnold and Gen. Grant born.		1823. Cooper's Pilot and Pio- neers.
	1823. Contributions to <i>Knight's Quarterly Magazine</i> .	1823. Parkman born.	1824. Irving's Tales of a Traveller.
1824. Elected Fellow of Trinity. Degree of M.A.	1824. Byron died.		1825. Webster's First Ban- ker Hill Oration.
	1825. First essay for the <i>Edinburgh Review</i> . Milton.	1825. Huxley born.	1826. Cooper's Last of the Mohicans.
1826. Called to the bar.	1827. Essay on Machia- velli.		1827. Poe's Tamerlane, etc.
1828. Commissioner of Bankruptcy.	1828. Essays on Dryden and History.	1828. George Meredith and D. G. Rossetti born.	1828. Irving's Life of Co- lumbus.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—MACAULAY.—Continued.

MACAULAY'S LIFE.	MACAULAY'S WORKS.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	ENGLISH LITERATURE.	AMERICAN LITERATURE.
1830. Member of Parliament for Calne.	1830. First speech in Parliament. 1831. Speeches on the Reform Bill. Essay on Boswell's Life of Johnson. 1832. Essays on Barleigh and Mirabeau. Speeches on Parliamentary Reform, etc. 1833. Essay on Horace Walpole. 1834. Essay on the Earl of Chatham.	1830. William IV. king. 1831. Owen Meredith born. 1832. Scott died. Leslie Stephen born. 1834. Lamb and Coleridge died. 1837. Victoria queen. Green and Swinburne born.	1830. Tennyson's Poems, chiefly Lyrical. 1832. Tennyson's Poems. 1833. Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. 1834. Bulwer's Last Days of Pompeii. 1836-37. Dickens's Pickwick Papers. 1837. Carlyle's French Revolution. 1838. Dickens's Nicholas Nickleby.	1830. Webster's Reply to Hayne. 1832. Irving's Alhambra. 1833. Longfellow's Outre-Mer. 1834. Bancroft's History of the United States, vol. i. 1836. Holmes's Poems. Emerson's Nature. 1837. Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella. Hawthorne's Twice Told Tales. Emerson's American Scholar. 1839. Longfellow's Hyperion and Voices of the Night. Whittier's Ballads and Anti-slavery Poems. 1840. Poe's Tales. Dana's Two Years before the Mast.
1838. Returned from India.	1838. Essay on Sir William Temple.	1838. Zachary Macaulay died. John Walter Besant born.	1838. Dickens's Nicholas Nickleby.	
1839. Member of Parliament for Edinburgh. Visit to Italy. Secretary at War.	1839. Essay on Church and State. Speech at Edinburgh. 1840. Essays on Lord Clive and the History of the Popes.	1840. H. M. Stanley born.		

1841. Re-elected to Parliament for Edinburgh.	1841. Essay on Warren Hastings.	1841. Browning's <i>Pippa Passes</i> . Carlyle's <i>Hero Worship</i> .	1841. Emerson's <i>Essays</i> , first series.
	1842. Lays of Ancient Rome.	1842. Tennyson's <i>Poems</i> .	
	1843. Essays on Madame D'Arblay and Addison.	1843. Ruskin's <i>Modern Painters</i> , vol. I. Dickens's <i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i> .	1843. Prescott's <i>Conquest of Mexico</i> .
	1844. Essay on Earl of Clutham (the last <i>Edinburgh Review</i> essay).	1844. E. Barrett's (Mrs. Browning's) <i>Poems</i> .	
1846. Paymaster-General.			1845. Poe's <i>Raven</i> .
1847. Defeated in Edinburgh election.			1847. Longfellow's <i>Evangeline</i> .
	1848. History of England, vols. i. and ii.	1847. Thackeray's <i>Vanity Fair</i> . Brontë's <i>Jane Eyre</i> . Tennyson's <i>Princess</i> .	
1849. Lord Rector of Glasgow University. Fellow of the Royal Society.	1849. Inaugural Speech at Glasgow.		1848. Lowell's <i>Biglow Papers</i> , first series, <i>Vision of Sir Launfelc</i> , &c.
			1849. Parkman's <i>Oregon Trail</i> . Whitier's <i>Voices of Freedom</i> .
1852. Elected to Parliament from Edinburgh without a canvass. Health began to fail.		1850. Wordsworth died. R. L. Stevenson born. Tennyson poet laureate. Cooper died.	1850. Tennyson's <i>In Memoriam</i> . Mrs. Brown- ing's <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> .
		1852. Webster and Moore died.	1850. Hawthorne's <i>Scarlet Letter</i> .
			1852. Stowe's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> .
	1854. Life of John Bunyan.	1853. Kingsley's <i>Hypatia</i> . 1854. Thackeray's <i>New-comers</i> .	

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—MACAULAY.—*Concluded.*

MACAULAY'S LIFE.	MACAULAY'S WORKS.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	ENGLISH LITERATURE.	AMERICAN LITERATURE.
1837. Became Baron Macaulay of Rothley. Foreign Member of French Academy. Member of Prussian Order of Merit.	1855. History of England, vols. iii. and iv. 1856. Lives of Oliver Goldsmith and Samuel Johnson.		1855. Tennyson's Maud. Arnold's poems. 1856. Froide's History of England, vols. i. and ii.	1855. Longfellow's Hiawatha. 1856. Motley's Dutch Republic.
1858. High Steward of Cambridge.			1858. Carlyle's Frederick the Great. Tennyson's Idylls of the King.	1858. Holmes's Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.
1859. Died December 28.	1859. Life of William Pitt.	1859. Irving, Prescott, De Quincey, Hunt, and Hallam died.	1859. Darwin's Origin of Species. George Eliot's Adam Bede.	

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—JOHNSON.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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JOHNSON'S LIFE.	CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1709. Born.		1709. Seventh year of Queen Anne's reign.	1709. <i>The Tatler</i> .
1710. Touched by the Queen for scrofula.		1710. Trial of Sacheverell.	1709-10. Rowe's edition of Shakspeare.
	1711. Hume born.		1711. Pope's Essay on Criticism.
	1713. Sterne born.		<i>The Spectator</i> .
	1715. Wycherley died.		1712. Pope's Rape of the Lock.
	1716. Garrick and Gray born.		1713. Addison's Cato.
		1714. George I. king.	1715. Pope's Iliad.
	1719. Addison died.		1717. Pope's Eloisa. Newton's Principia.
	1720. Baron Munchausen born.		1719. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe.
	1721. Prior died. Smollett born.	1720. South Sea Bubble.	Watts's Hymns.
	1723. Reynolds born.		
	1727. Newton died.		1723. Pope's Odyssey.
		1727. George II. king. War with Austria and Spain.	1726. Swift's Gulliver's Travels.
1728. Entered Pembroke College, Oxford.	1728. Goldsmith and Cook born.		1728. Pope's Dunciad.
1729. Returned home.	1729. Congreve and Steele died.		
	1730. Burke born.		1730. Thompson's Seasons.
1731. Father died.	1731. Defoe died. Cowper born.		
1732. Usher at Market Bosworth.	1732. Gay died.		1732. Pope's Essay on Man. Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac.
1734. Residence at Birmingham.	1735. Rob Roy died. Beattie born.		
1735. Marriage. School at Edial.	1737. Gibbon born.		
1737. Removal to London. Irene written.			

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—JOHNSON.—*Continued.*

JOHNSON'S LIFE.	CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1738. Contributions begun to <i>The Gentleman's Magazine</i> .	1738. Macpherson born. 1739. Mrs. Thrale born 1740. Boswell born.	1738. First Methodists in London. 1740. Frederick, Emperor of Germany. 1740-48. War of the Austrian Succession.	1740. Richardson's Pamela.
1740-43. Reports of Debates in the Senate of Lilliput.			1741. Handel's Messiah. 1742. Young's Night Thoughts. Fielding's Joseph Andrews.
1744. Life of Savage.	1743. Paley born. 1744. Pope died. 1745. Swift died.	1746. Charles Edward defeated at Culloden.	1744. Akenside's Pleasures of Imagination.
1747. Prospectus of the Dictionary.			1746. Collins's Odes.
1749. The Vanity of Human Wishes. Irene acted.	1749. Charles James Fox born.		1748. Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe. Smollett's Roderick Random.
1750-52. <i>The Rambler</i> .			1749. Fielding's Tom Jones.
1751. Mrs Johnson died.	1752. Sheridan and Madame D'Arblay, born. 1754. Fielding died. Crabbe born.	1750-60. Lord Clive in India.	1751. Gray's Elegy. Fielding's Amelia. Smollett's Peregrine Pickle.
1755. The Dictionary published.		1755. Lisbon earthquake. 1756-63. Seven Years' War.	1754. Hume's History of England, vol. I. 1756. Burke's Sublime and Beautiful.



1758-60. <i>The Idler</i> . 1759. Mother died. Rasselas.	1759. Burns and Pitt born. 1760. Boswell's first visit to London. 1761. Richardson died. 1762. Lady Montagu died.	1760. George III. king.	1757. Gray's Odes. 1759. Sterne's <i>Tristram Shandy</i> . 1760. Goldsmith's <i>Citizen of the World</i> .
1762. Pensioned. 1763. First meeting with Boswell.	1764. Hogarth died. 1765. Young died.	1763. Wedgwood potteries established. 1764. Spinning-Jenny invented. 1765. Stamp Act. Steam-engine invented.	1762. Macpherson's <i>Ossian</i> . 1763. Lady Montagu's Letters. 1764. Walpole's Castle of Otranto.
1764. The Club founded. 1765. Degree of LL.D. Intimacy with the <i>Thrales</i> . Edition of Shakespeare.	1766. Maria Edgeworth born. 1768. Sterne died.		1766. Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield.
	1769. Garrick died. Napoleon and Wellington born. 1770. Wordsworth born.		1768. Goldsmith's <i>Good-Natured Man</i> . Sterne's <i>Scutimental Journey</i> . 1769. Letters of <i>Julius</i> .
	1771. Smollett and Gray died. Scott born.		1770. Goldsmith's <i>Deserted Village</i> . 1771. Smollett's <i>Humphrey Clinker</i> . Beginning of great English journals.
1773. Journey to the Hebrides.	1772. Coleridge born. Swedenborg died.	1773. Boston Tea Party.	1773. Goldsmith's <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> .
1774. Tour to North Wales.	1774. Southey born. Goldsmith died.	1775. Battle of Bunker Hill.	1775. Sheridan's Rivals.
1775. Journey to the Hebrides, and Taxation no Tyranny. Degree of D.C.L. Visit to Paris.	1775. Lamb, Jane Austen, and Landor born. 1776. Hume died.	1776. American Declaration of Independence.	1776. Gibbon's <i>Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire</i> . Smith's <i>Wealth of Nations</i> .

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—JOHNSON.—*Concluded.*

JOHNSON'S LIFE.	CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY.	CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.	CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.
1777-81. Lives of the Poets.	1777. Campbell born. 1778. Hazlitt and Hallam born. Voltaire and Chatham died. 1779. Capt. Cook died. Moore born. 1782. Webster born. 1783. Irving born.	1777. Burgoyne's surrender.	1777. Sheridan's School for Scandal.
1784. Died.		1783. Peace with America. 1784. Mail coaches used.	1783. Crabbe's Village. 1786. Burns's Poems.

# SAMUEL JOHNSON

(DECEMBER, 1856)

1. SAMUEL JOHNSON, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments 5 seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, 10 and, though he had qualified himself for municipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, 15 Samuel was born on the 18th of September, 1709. In the child, the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarities which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of 20 parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe 25 that the royal touch was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the

court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood.

5 Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame

10 every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his

15 studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull

20 to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek: for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist; and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous

25 library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan delicacy of taste which is the boast of the great public schools of England he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to

30 the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity; and he eagerly devoured hundreds of

35 pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own

*Review*

Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

2. While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined; his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university; but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius; and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

3. At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned

with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendancy. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the  
5 ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's "Messiah" into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many  
10 admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

4. The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His  
15 family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a  
20 pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

5. His life, during the thirty years which followed, was  
25 one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He  
30 had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his ges-  
35 tures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes

terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium; they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

6. With such infirmities of body and mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birthplace and

his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Herve, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical  
5 court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to dis-  
10 gust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He  
15 repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian,  
20 with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse: but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

7. While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love. The object of his passion was Mrs. Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in  
25 gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in  
30 the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned



cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

8. His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

9. At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of "Irene" in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

10. Never, since literature became a calling in England, had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that

he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other

5 hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had

10 ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of

15 state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose "Seasons" were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose "Pasquin" had had a greater run than any drama since

20 "The Beggar's Opera," was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and pri-

25 vations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks." Nor was

30 the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

11. Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over

35 him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey,

who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed 5 feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

12. The effect of the privations and sufferings which 10 he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often 15 very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subter- 20 ranean ordinaries and alamode beefshops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke 25 out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in 30 some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, ex- 35

cept Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

- 5 13. About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. That journal, just entering on the ninth year  
10 of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either  
15 House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput." France was Blefuscu; London was Mildendo: pounds were sprugs: the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac secretary of State:  
20 Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad: and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said; but sometimes he had to  
25 find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction—for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another—but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against  
30 the Montagues, or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted  
35 on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield

Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobitical colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest. Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of “the zealot of rebellion.” Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government, the mildest that had ever been known in the world — under a government, which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action—he fancied that he was a slave; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart’s tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stockjobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates

- on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the *Magazine*. But Johnson long afterwards owned
- 5 that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition. ←
- 10 14. A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem
- 15 in which Juvenal had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's "Satires" and "Epistles" had recently appeared, were in every hand,
- 20 and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.
- 25 15. Johnson's "London" appeared without his name in May, 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem; but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to
- 30 lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was
- 35 welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of "Lon-

don." Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained 5 a bookseller's hack.

16. It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very 10 different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index makers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his 15 blanket; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober; and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk: Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board 20 where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the 25 most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of iron on 30 his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their 35

bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been  
5 unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable com-  
10 panion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard  
15 the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and, in 1743, died,  
20 penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

17. Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared  
25 widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its  
30 faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

35 18. The life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well



known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task. 5 10

19. The prospectus of the "Dictionary" he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door. 15 20 25 30

20. Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his "Dictionary" by the end of 1750; but it 33

was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the "Vanity of Human Wishes," an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned, too, that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

21. For the copyright of the "Vanity of Human Wishes" Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

22. A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him

and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathised with each other on so many points on which they sympathised with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought "Irene" out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the "Vanity of Human Wishes" closely resemble the versification of "Irene." The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copy-

right of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation. H H

23. About a year after the representation of "Irene," he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, 5 manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the *Tatler*, and by the still more brilliant success of the *Spectator*. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. The *Lay Monastery*, the *Censor*, the *Free-* 10 *thinker*, the *Plain Dealer*, the *Champion*, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so 15 many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the *Spectator*, appeared the first number of the *Rambler*. From March 1750 to March 1752, this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.
24. From the first the *Rambler* was enthusiastically ad- 20 mired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the *Spectator*. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Doddington, among 25 whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Doddington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic, two of His Royal Highness's gentlemen 30 carried a gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door 35 as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

25. By the public the *Rambler* was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted, they became 5 popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself 10 to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurd- 15 ity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. 20

On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, 25 the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire 30 Bluster and Mrs. Busy, Quisquilius and Vennustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

26. The last *Rambler* was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs. Johnson had been given over by the physi- 35

eians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her. He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre or the judgment of the *Monthly Review*. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his "Dictionary." She was gone; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the "Dictionary" was at length complete.

27. It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the *Ramblers* had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called the *World*, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of the *World* the "Dictionary" was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he

should be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It 5 was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The "Dictionary" came forth 10 without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could 15 read that passage without tears.

28. The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's "Diction- 20 ary" was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philoso- 25 phers are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic 30 language except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

29. The "Dictionary," though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteenth 35

hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication  
 5 of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his  
 10 wants by constant toil. He abridged his "Dictionary." He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive em-  
 15 ployments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the *Literary Magazine*. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's  
 20 "Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil."

30. In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled the *Idler*. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and, indeed, impudently pirated,  
 25 while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The *Idler* may be described as a second part of the *Rambler*, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

31. While Johnson was busy with his *Idlers*, his mother,  
 30 who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little  
 35 book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press



without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was "Rasselas."

32. The success of "Rasselas" was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the "Vanity of Human Wishes"; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review* took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

33. About the plan of "Rasselas" little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly

of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's "Travels."

5 But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs. Lennox or Mrs. Sheridan,  
10 transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock  
15 is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and  
20 may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

25 34. By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in  
30 his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate "Dictionary," he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as  
35 a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners

of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

35. This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.

36. One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years: and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His

friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed  
5 fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he  
10 wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter, 1765, came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and  
15 seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention  
20 to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St. John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured  
25 with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some  
30 man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson "Pomposo," asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This  
35 terrible word proved effectual; and in October, 1765, ap-

peared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

37. This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of "Hamlet." But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the "English Dictionary" there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben. Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubt-

less have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without  
 5 having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had  
 10 discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience; and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won.  
 15 He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, be-  
 20 tween 1765 and 1775, Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the life of Savage and on "Rasselas."

38. But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was  
 25 active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. (He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit,  
 30 humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips, was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the *Rambler*. But in his  
 35 talk there was no pompous triads, and little more than a

fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. [All was simplicity, ease, and vigour.] He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. [To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry] in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones, the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his

inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but  
5 of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not  
10 easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener,  
15 was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

39. Among the members of this celebrated body was  
20 one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was  
25 a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his  
30 writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and  
35 imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have



fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water drinker; and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

40. Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed

a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson; and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated, preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes

provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick-room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck and Macaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs. Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs. Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-

heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs. Desmoulins, Polly, and Levett continued to torment him and to live upon him.

41. The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August, 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering

about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his "Journey to the Hebrides" was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. (It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian.) But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him, whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country, with libels much more dishonourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world

that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose "Fingal" had been  
5 proved in the "Journey" to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor  
10 had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

42. Of other assailants Johnson took no notice what-  
15 ever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly  
20 eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and, when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred  
25 bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicol, and Hendersons did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give  
30 them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself. 5 10

43. Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the "Journey to the Hebrides," Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale. But his "Taxation no Tyranny" was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could de- 15 20 25 30 35

fect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the "Dictionary" and the *Rambler* were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would  
 5 best consult his credit by writing no more.

44. But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote "Rasselas" in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a  
 10 subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The  
 15 question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed  
 20 if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

25 45. On Easter Eve, 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that  
 30 a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the  
 35 Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had de-



rived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

46. The "Lives of the Poets" are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

47. Savage's "Life" Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circum-

stances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the "Journey to the Hebrides," and in the "Lives of the Poets" is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

48. Among the lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.

49. This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the "History of Charles V."; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the "History of Charles V." is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the "Lives of the Poets."

50. Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was

sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham; she never pressed him to return; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June, 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler; that all London was crying shame upon her; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron, and the two pictures in "Hamlet." He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and the hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

51. He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily

affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his *Idlers* seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard; and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year; but this hope was disappointed; and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker; his breath grew shorter; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham sate much in the sick-room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch a night by the bed. Frances Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond

death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December, 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian,—Cowley and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

52. Since his death the popularity of his works—the “Lives of the Poets,” and, perhaps, the “Vanity of Human Wishes,” excepted—has greatly diminished. His “Dictionary” has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his *Rambler* or his *Idler* is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of “Rasselas” has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell’s book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON.

1 1. *Eminent English writers of the eighteenth century.* See Chronological Table.

1 4. *Lichfield.* A clear idea of geographical relations is indispensable to an intelligent grasp of literary history ; the student, therefore, should keep a map near him, and fix in mind the location of the places associated with important persons and events.

1 11. *Churchman.* A member of the Established Church of England as distinguished from Nonconformists or Dissenters, *i.e.*, the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, etc. For the struggle between religious parties in England, which is a long story, beginning in the reign of Henry VIII., at the time of the Reformation in Germany, see histories of England.

1 13. *The sovereigns in possession* were, first, William and Mary, who ascended the throne at the Revolution of 1688, which dethroned James II. ; and, afterwards, Anne, who succeeded William and Mary in 1702. Some acquaintance with the political history of this period, which may be gained from any history of England, is necessary to a full understanding of the life of Johnson.

1 14. *Jacobite.* From “*Jacobus*,” the Latin form of “*James*.” An adherent of James II. after he was deposed, or of his son James Edward, the “*Old Pretender*” ; or of his grandson Charles Edward, the “*Young Pretender*” ; hence, an opposer of the Revolution of 1688.

1 15. A picture of Johnson’s birthplace may be seen in G. Birkbeck Hill’s edition of *Boswell’s Johnson*.

1 26. *The royal touch.* It is a very old superstition that

scrofula can be cured by a touch of the sovereign's hand; hence, the disease is popularly called "the king's evil." See *Macbeth*, IV., iii., and Addison's account of Sir Roger de Coverley's visit to Westminster Abbey (Lowell's edition, in this series, p. 146). Queen Anne was the last English sovereign to touch for "the evil." For more information on the subject, see Chambers's *Book of Days*, vol. i., pp. 82-85.

2 5. *Her hand was applied in vain.* Perhaps the father accounted for the failure, as did many Jacobites on similar occasions, by the reflection that Mary, William, and Anne were "usurpers," and therefore could not be expected to have inherited a power which came only with "divine right"!

2 11. A picture of the Grammar School at Lichfield, which was attended by Johnson, Garrick, and Addison, is shown in Hill's edition of *Boswell's Johnson*.

2 22. *Attic.* Attica was the district of Greece in which Athens was the principal city.

2 26. *Augustan delicacy of taste.* The reign of Augustus Cæsar (B.C. 27-A.D. 14) was the golden age of Roman literature and art.

2 27. *The great public schools of England* are Winchester, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Westminster, Charterhouse, Shrewsbury, St. Paul's, and Merchant Taylors', which are supported, not by taxation, like the free "public schools" of America, but by endowments and the tuition of pay scholars.

2 31. *The great restorers of learning.* During the "Dark Ages" (A.D. 600-1200), the civilization which Rome had spread over Europe decayed, and European society fell back into a state of semi-barbarism. The term "Revival of Learning" is usually applied to the special outburst of enthusiasm for Greek and Latin literature and art which originated with Italian scholars in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and which is more properly called the "Renaissance." Foremost among the restorers of learning were Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Politian (Italy), Erasmus (Holland), Casaubon (France), and Sir Thomas More (England).

2 33. *Petrarch.* The greatest lyric poet of Italy (1304-1374), and an ardent scholar. He wrote both in Latin and in Italian, himself prizing most his Latin works; but he is now more



famous for his beautiful Italian lyrics. See Byron's *Childe Harold*, canto iv., stanzas 30-34 (lines 262-306).

3 10. England has five universities: two ancient, Oxford and Cambridge; and three modern, London (1836), Durham (1837), and the Victoria University (1880).

3 13. *Pembroke College*. One of the twenty colleges that compose the University of Oxford. For an account of the English universities see the encyclopædias under "University," "Oxford," and "Cambridge."

3 20. *Macrobius*. An obscure Latin author (*circa* 400 A.D.).

3 27. *Christ Church*. One of the most fashionable of the Oxford colleges.

3 32. *Gentleman commoner*. One who pays for his commons, *i.e.*, a student who is not dependent on any foundation for support, but pays all the university charges; corresponding, in some American schools, to a "pay scholar" as distinguished from one on a scholarship.

4 8. *Pope's "Messiah."* Pope's place in English literature is so important that the details of his life and work should be looked up in the encyclopædias or the histories of English literature. A good short biography will be found in the English Men of Letters Series. No poet except Shakespeare is oftener quoted. The *Messiah* was originally contributed to the *Spectator*.

6 11. *Usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire*. In Great Britain, "grammar schools" are those in which Latin and Greek are taught as the principal subjects of instruction. In their curricula they do not differ from the "public" schools. See note to 2 27. "Usher" means, of course, an "assistant master."

6 19. *Politian* (1454-1494). The friend of Lorenzo de' Medici (the great patron of Italian learning), and one of the leaders of the Italian Renaissance. See note to 2 31.

6 24. *Mrs. Elizabeth Porter* was twenty years older than Johnson.

6 29. *The Queensberrys and Lepels*. English families of high rank.

6 33. *Titty*. A nickname for "Elizabeth."

7 22. *David Garrick*. One of the greatest of English actors, equally at home in tragedy and comedy. Garrick was so promi-

ment in the life and literature of the eighteenth century that the details of his career should be looked up in an encyclopædia. See also Goldsmith's poem *Retaliation*, which contains a sketch of Garrick's character.

7 33. *In the preceding generation.* Addison, for example.

8 5. *Several writers of the nineteenth century*, etc. For instance, Byron, Scott, George Eliot, and Macaulay himself. See Introduction.

8 12. See note to 4 8.

8 17. *Thomson.* James Thomson, an English poet (1700-1748), whose fame rests on his *Seasons*, *The Castle of Indolence*, and *Rule Britannia*, which are worth the student's attention.

8 18. *Fielding.* Henry Fielding (1707-1754), the first great English novelist. His important novels were *Joseph Andrews*, *Jonathan Wild*, *Tom Jones*, and *Amelia*. A charming short sketch of Fielding's life is to be found in Thackeray's *English Humourists*.

8 20. *The Beggar's Opera*, by John Gay, had a run of sixty-three nights, and by its success banished from the stage for a time the Italian opera, which it ridiculed.

8 29. *A porter's knot.* A pad for supporting burdens on the head.

9 9. *Drury Lane.* A street in the heart of London, running north and south about midway between Charing Cross and St. Paul's Cathedral. In the time of the Stuarts it was an aristocratic part of the city, but about Johnson's time its respectability began to wane.

9 21. *Alamode beefshops.* "Alamode beef" was "seraps and remainders of beef boiled down into a thick soup or stew."—*Murray's Dictionary*.

10 1. *Osborne.* "It has been confidently related, with many embellishments, that Johnson one day knocked Osborne down in his shop, with a folio, and put his foot upon his neck. The simple truth I had from Johnson himself. 'Sir, he was impertinent to me, and I beat him. But it was not in his shop: it was in my own chamber.'"—Boswell.

"There is nothing to tell, dearest lady, but that he was insolent and I beat him, and that he was a blockhead and told of it,

which I should never have done. . . . I have beat many a fellow, but the rest had the wit to hold their tongues.”—Piozzi’s *Anecdotes of Johnson*.

10 4. *The Harleian Library*. The famous library collected by Robert Harley, First Earl of Oxford (1661–1724), and afterwards bought by Osborne. The books were described in a printed catalogue of four volumes, part of which was made by Johnson.

10 13. *It was not then safe*, etc. For the reason see Macaulay’s *History of England*, chapter iii., the paragraph beginning, “No part of the load which the old mails carried out was more important than the newsletters.” For a discussion of the relation of the Publicity of Parliaments to Liberty see Lieber’s *Civil Liberty and Self-Government*, chapter xiii.

10 17. *Lilliput*. The land of the pygmies described in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, a book which every boy should read. The names Blefuscu, Mildendo, etc., occur in that celebrated classic.

10 29. *Capulets and Montagues*. The English spelling of the names of the Cappelletti and Montecchi, two noble families of Northern Italy, chiefly memorable for the legend on which Shakespeare has founded his play of *Romeo and Juliet*.

10 30. *The Blues of the Roman Circus against the Greens*. In Roman chariot races the drivers were at first distinguished by white and red liveries. Afterwards two additional colors, a light green and a cerulean blue, were introduced. In course of time the Romans, like modern “sporting-men,” devoted their lives and fortunes to the color which they espoused; and thus were formed certain “factions of the circus,” which often came to blows in their rivalry. For a fuller account of this subject see Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter xl.

10 32. *The Church*. The Established Church of England.

10 35. *Sucheverell*. A high church divine (1672–1724) who maintained the doctrine of non-resistance to the king. For an account of his prosecution by the Whigs see histories of England.

11 6. *Jacobitical*. See note to 1 14.

11 9. *Tom Tempest*. A character in Johnson’s *Idler* (No. 10).

11 11. *Laud* (1573–1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, and principal adviser of Charles I. in all matters relating to the Church. He was of the opinion that “unity cannot long continue in the Church when uniformity is shut out of the Church door;” and

when he came into ecclesiastical power he attempted to enforce uniformity of worship by tyrannical measures. Laud soon became profoundly hated by the Parliamentarians, and was finally beheaded by order of Parliament, in spite of the intercession of the king. For an account of his character and work see Gardiner's *Student's History of England*, or the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. See also Macaulay's *Essay on Hallam*.

11 15. *Hampden*. A statesman of the time of Charles I., famous for his resistance to the demands of the king for "ship-money." His life and work should be looked up in detail.

11 17. *Fulke and Clarendon*. Statesmen of the time of Charles I., and adherents of the king.

11 18. *Roundheads*. The adherents of Parliament in the struggle against Charles I., so called in ridicule, from their fashion of wearing their hair closely cut. The Cavaliers, their opponents, wore their hair in long ringlets.

11 35. *The Great Rebellion*. The rebellion against Charles I. The explanation of Johnson's prejudice against the Scotch is not so simple as Macaulay suggests. The passage in Boswell's *Johnson*, which Macaulay probably had in mind, is as follows :

"After musing for some time, he [Johnson] said: 'I wonder how I should have any enemies, for I do harm to nobody.' BOSWELL: 'In the first place, Sir, you will be pleased to recollect that you set out with attacking the Scotch; so you got a whole nation for your enemies.' JOHNSON: 'Why, I own that by my definition of *oats* I meant to vex them.' BOSWELL: 'Pray, Sir, can you trace the cause of your antipathy to the Scotch?' JOHNSON: 'I cannot, Sir.' BOSWELL: 'Old Mr. Sheridan says it was because they sold Charles the First.' JOHNSON: 'Then, Sir, old Mr. Sheridan has found out a very good reason!'" The definition of *oats* referred to was: "A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

12 9. *The opposition*. The party in Parliament opposed to the Ministry.

12 14. *That noble poem in which Juvenal had described, etc.* The *Third Satire*, in which Juvenal (A.D. 38-120) tells why his friend left Rome to dwell on the sea-coast. Juvenal is known to us only through his sixteen *Satires*, which occupy the very first rank in satirical literature, and are of priceless value as pictures

of Roman life in his day. Dryden's versions of five of the satires are admirable, and should be looked up. A good metrical translation is Gifford's. Pope's imitations of Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* may be found in any large library. Johnson's *London*, imitating Juvenal's *Third Satire*, is in Hales's *Longer English Poems*.

13 14. *Pledged*. Pawned.

13 29. *The blue ribands in Saint James's Square*. The ribbons worn by members of the Order of the Garter. St. James's Square contains the mansions of the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Derby, the Bishop of London, and other members of the aristocracy.

13 22. *Psalmazar*, a French adventurer, won fame and money by pretending to be a native of Formosa.

13 31. *Newgate*. Once the principal prison of London. Among famous prisoners confined there were Daniel Defoe, Jack Sheppard, and Titus Oates.

14 7. *The Piazza of Covent Garden*. Originally the "Convent Garden" of the monks of Westminster. In the Covent Garden Piazzas, now nearly all cleared away, the families of many distinguished persons used to reside.

14 26. *Grub Street*. "The name of a street in London much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street." —*Johnson's Dictionary*.

15 5. *Warburton*. William Warburton (1698–1779), Bishop of Gloucester, a celebrated critic and controversialist. For Johnson's estimate of him see Johnson's *Life of Pope*.

15 15. *Chesterfield*. Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* is still considered a classic. Johnson said of it, "Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman."

16 5. *The "Vanity of Human Wishes"* is in both Hales's *Longer English Poems* and Syle's *From Milton to Tennyson*. The passages referred to by Macaulay should be looked up and compared with the passages from Juvenal's *Tenth Satire*. See note on 12 14.

16 29. *His tragedy, begun many years before*. This was *Irene* (see p. 7), the plot of which concerns the unhappy love of Mahomet the Great, first emperor of the Turks, for a beautiful Greek captive named Irene.

16 32. *Goodman's Fields*. Not far from the Tower of London.

16 35. *Drury Lane Theatre*. One of the oldest and most important of the London theatres, first opened in 1674, with an address by Dryden ; several times rebuilt. Here Garrick, Kean, the Kembles, and Mrs. Siddons used to act. For *Drury Lane* see note to 9 9.

17 30. *He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be*. For a discussion of what blank verse should and should not be, see Lanier's *The Science of English Verse* (Scribner's), Carson's *Primer of English Verse* (Ginn and Co.), or Gummere's *Handbook of Poetics* (Ginn and Co.).

18 6, 7. *The Tatler*. *The Spectator*. The former was a periodical established by Richard Steele in 1709, and was the forerunner of English literary magazines. It ran successfully for nearly two years. Two months after the last number of the *Tatler*, the *Spectator* appeared, published every week day, and supported chiefly by the contributions of Addison, assisted by Steele. The *Spectator* ran with great success until 1713, when it was succeeded by the *Guardian*, the last periodical on which Addison and Steele worked together. The student who is not familiar with the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* should make their acquaintance at once. For an interesting account of the *Spectator and the Tatler*, see the Introduction in Dr. Lowell's edition of the *Sir Roger de Coverley* papers in this series. For a fuller account of these famous periodicals, see Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*, or Courthope's *Life of Addison* in the English Men of Letters Series.

18 21. *Richardson*. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), the famous English novelist who wrote *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*.

18 23. *Young*. Edward Young (1681-1765), an English poet, best known for his *Night Thoughts*.

*Hartley*. David Hartley (1705-1757), a physician and psychologist, a friend of Warburton, Young, and Bishop Butler.

18 24. *Bubb Doddington*. "Indeed, as far as we recollect, there were in the whole House of Commons only two men of distinguished abilities who were not connected with the government ; and those two men stood so low in public estimation, that the only service which they could have rendered to any government would have been to oppose it. We speak of Lord

George Sackville and Bubb Doddington."—Macaulay's *Essay on the Earl of Chatham*.

18 29. *Prince Frederic*. The oldest son of George II. and father of George III.

18 31. *Leicester House*. Once the home of the Sidneys ; in the time of Johnson, the residence of the Prince of Wales.

19 24-28. *Sir Roger, Will Wimble, Will Honeycomb*, etc. Characters or sketches in the *Spectator*. See, for instance, the charming Nos. 5, 69, 106, 108, 159, and 584. All the papers relating to Sir Roger and his club have been edited by Dr. Lowell for this series.

19 30-33. *Squire Bluster, Mrs. Busy*, etc. Characters or sketches in the *Rambler*.

20 9. *The Gunnings*. Two sisters, Elizabeth and Maria, celebrated and fashionable beauties of the middle of the eighteenth century. Frequent mention of them is made by Horace Walpole in his correspondence.

20 10. *Lady Mary*. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), whose beauty and wit were famous throughout England. When her husband was appointed ambassador to Constantinople, she accompanied him, and wrote from the East her *Letters*, one of the most delightful books in our language. She introduced into Europe the practice of inoculation, which she had seen in Turkey.

20 12. *The Monthly Review*. Whig in politics and non-conformist in theology ; therefore unfriendly to Johnson, who was a Tory and a Churchman. Its opponent and rival was the *Critical Review*, which was supported by Smollett, Johnson, and Robertson.

21 8. This famous *letter* is as follows :

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

February 7, 1755.

*My Lord,*

I have been lately informed by the proprietor of the *World* that two papers in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished is an honor which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your

Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address ; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending ; but I found my attendance so little encouraged that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I have done all that I could ; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms or was repulsed from your door ; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help ? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind ; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it ; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it ; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less ; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

SAM. JOHNSON.

**21 15.** *Horne Tooke.* John Horne, an eminent English politician and philologist, whose conversational powers rivalled those of Johnson. See Boswell's *Johnson*, 1778. The passage in the *Preface*, which moved Horne so deeply, is often quoted as a specimen of Johnson's best style, and is as follows :

“In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed ; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the author, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the



faults of that which it condemns ; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it that the English Dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great ; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. If the lexicons of ancient tongues, now immutably fixed, and comprised in a few volumes, be yet, after the toil of successive ages, inadequate and delusive ; if the aggregated knowledge, and co-operating diligence of the Italian academicians, did not secure them from the censure of Beni ; if the embodied critics of France, when fifty years had been spent upon their work, were obliged to change its economy, and give their second edition another form, I may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which, if I could obtain, in this gloom of solitude, what could it avail me ? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds : I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

**21 30. *Teutonic language.*** The Teutonic languages are those spoken by the Teutonic or German races, *i.e.*, German, Dutch, English, Danish, Swedish, etc., as distinguished from the Romance or Latin languages, *i.e.*, Italian, Spanish, French, etc. Much light is thrown on the origin and meaning of English words by a knowledge of kindred words in the other languages of the Teutonic group.

**21 32. *Was scarcely a Teutonic language.*** An exaggerated reference to Johnson's fondness for words of Latin origin. In the *Preface to the Dictionary*, seventy-two per cent. of the words are of old English, *i.e.*, Teutonic origin, and only twenty-eight per cent. of Latin or Greek origin.

**21 33. *Junius and Skinner.*** Francis Junius (1589-1678) and Stephen Skinner (1623-1667), were scholars who devoted themselves to the study of the Teutonic languages. How lightly Johnson took his etymological labors may be gathered from the following anecdote :

"Dr. Adams found him [Johnson] one day busy at his 'Dictionary,' when the following dialogue ensued :

"ADAMS. This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies ?

"JOHNSON. Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welch gentleman who has published a collection of Welch proverbs, who will help me with the Welch.

"ADAMS. But, Sir, how can you do this in three years?

"JOHNSON. Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years.

"ADAMS. But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their dictionary.

"JOHNSON. Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a French man."—Boswell's *Life*, 1747.

22 5. *Spunging-houses* were victualling houses or taverns, frequently belonging to bailiffs, where persons arrested for debt were kept by a bailiff for twenty-four hours before being lodged in prison, in order that their friends might have an opportunity of settling the debt. The following is the half-jocose definition of Johnson's *Dictionary*: "Spunging-house, a house to which debtors are taken before commitment to prison, where the bailiffs *sponge* upon them, or riot at their cost."

22 19. *Jenyns*. Soame Jenyns (1704–1787). Johnson justly condemned his *Inquiry* as a slight and shallow attempt to solve one of the most difficult of moral problems.

23 4. *Rasselas*. *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*. Published in 1759. Frequently reprinted in English, and translated into many foreign languages. See Bibliography.

23 6. *Miss Lydia Languish*. A character in Sheridan's famous comedy, *The Rivals*. Her peculiarities may be inferred from her name.

24 4. *Bruce's Travels*. James Bruce (1730–1804) was the most celebrated of the early African explorers.

24 8. *Burke*. Edmund Burke (1729–1797), orator and statesman, distinguished above all the men of his times for eloquence and political foresight, and without doubt one of the most cultivated men of the eighteenth century. See Professor Cook's edition of Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*, in the present series.

24 9. *Mrs. Lennox*. A literary woman of Johnson's time. She was a great favorite with Johnson, who cited her in his *Dictionary*, and gave a supper in her honor to celebrate the pub-

lication of her first book. Much interesting information about her is given in Boswell's *Johnson*. *Mrs. Sheridan*. The mother of the dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan. See note on 23 6. She was something of an author, and "a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man." Johnson spent many pleasant hours at her home.

24 22. *The poet who made Hector quote Aristotle*, etc. Shakespeare. See *Troilus and Cressida*, Act II., Sc. ii., and *Winter's Tale*, Act II., Sc. i., and Act V., Sc. ii. *Aristotle*, the great Greek philosopher, lived in the fourth century B.C., eight hundred years after the Trojan War. *Hector*, the great hero of Troy.

24 23. *Julio Romano* was an Italian painter (1492-1546), the most gifted of Raphael's pupils.

25 3. *The Lord Privy Seal*. The Privy Seal is appended to British documents of minor importance which do not require the Great Seal. The officer who has the custody of the seal is now called the Lord Privy Seal. He is the fifth great officer of state, and has generally a seat in the Cabinet. The Lord Privy Seal referred to in the text was Lord Gower. Johnson once said to Boswell: "You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *sometimes we say a Gower*. Thus it went to the press; but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."—Boswell's *Johnson*, 1755.

25 13. *Oxford was becoming loyal*. See 11 5, 6. George III., of course, belonged, not to the House of Stuart, but to the House of Hanover.

25 14, 15. To be explained by lines 10-12.

25 16. *Lord Bute*. For a full account of Bute, see Macaulay's *Essay on the Earl of Chatham*.

25 29. *The printer's devil*. The youngest apprentice in a printing office, who runs on errands and does dirty work, such as washing ink from rollers and type, sweeping, etc. By "fearing" him, Macaulay means dreading the call for more copy which the "devil" would bring him.

26 20. *A ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane*. For a full account of "Scratching Fanny, the Cock Lane Ghost," and the investigation of the matter by Johnson, see Hill's edition of

Boswell's *Johnson*, 1763; Hare's *Walks in London*, vol. i., pp. 204 ff.; Mr. Lang's book, *The Cock Lane Ghost*, or the interesting article in *Harper's Magazine* (August, 1893). Macaulay's account of the affair is unjust to Johnson.

26 28. *Churchill*. An English poet and satirist (1731-1764), now remembered as much for his profligacy as for his poetry. Some of his lines on the Cock Lane Ghost are reprinted in Hare's *Walks in London*.

27 10. *Polonius*. See Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

27 11. *Wilhelm Meister*. The hero of a famous novel of the same name, by Goethe. The remarks on the character of Hamlet, which Macaulay refers to, are quoted in the Introduction to Mr. Rolfe's edition of *Hamlet* (Harper).

27 30. *Ben*. Ben Jonson (1574-1637), next to his friend Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan age.

28 2, 3. *Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles*. The three great tragic poets of Greece. Of their two hundred and fifty-eight dramas, only thirty-two have come down to us. The chief works of Æschylus (525-456 B.C.) are *Prometheus Bound* and *Agamemnon*; of Sophocles (495-405 B.C.), *Œdipus Tyrannus*, *Œdipus Coloneus*, and *Antigone*; of Euripides (485-406 B.C.), *Alcestis*, *Electra*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Orestes*, *Bacchæ*, and *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

28 5, 6. *Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher*. Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age, contemporary with Shakespeare.

28 16. *The Royal Academy*. The oldest and most influential institution in London connected with the Fine Arts, founded in 1768. Johnson was appointed "Professor in Ancient Literature" the year after it was founded, and about the same time Goldsmith was elected "Professor in Ancient History." Of this appointment, Goldsmith, writing to his brother in January, 1770, said: "The King has lately been pleased to make me Professor of Ancient History in a Royal Academy of Painting which he has just established, but there is no salary annexed, and I took it rather as a compliment to the institution than any benefit to myself. Honors to one in my situation are something like ruffles to one that wants a shirt."

29 31. *Goldsmith*. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), the author of the finest poem (*The Deserted Village*), the most exquisite novel

(*The Vicar of Wakefield*), and the most delightful comedy (*She Stoops to Conquer*) of the period to which he belongs. For an excellent short account of him, see the Introduction to Miss Jordan's edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield* in this series, or Macaulay's *Life* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

29 32. *Reynolds*. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), the first president of the Royal Academy, and generally acknowledged as the head of the English school of painting in the eighteenth century. He wrote much on art, and contributed, at Johnson's request, three papers to the *Idler*.

29 34. *Gibbon*. Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), author of the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, probably the greatest historical work ever written in English. *Jones*. Sir William Jones (1746-1794), a great Oriental scholar, the founder and first president of the Royal Asiatic Society "for investigating the history, antiquities, arts, sciences, and literature of Asia."

31 2. *Wilkes*. John Wilkes (1727-1797), a man of bad character, prominent in the politics of his day, and notorious chiefly for prosecutions brought against him that involved the liberty of the press. A full account of him will be found in Macaulay's *Essay on the Earl of Chatham*, or in Gardiner's *Student's History of England*.

31 4. *Whitfield*. George Whitfield (1714-1770), one of the founders of Methodism, celebrated for the power of his preaching, which was usually done in the open air. He made seven missionary journeys to America. Some interesting information about him is given in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*.

32 27. *Southwark*. On the south side of the Thames. *Streat-ham Common*, in South London.

33 11. *Buck*. Dandy. *Maccaroni*. "The word is derived from the Macaroni club, instituted by a set of flashy men who had travelled in Italy, and introduced Italian macaroni at Almack's subscription table."—Brewer's *Handbook of Phrase and Fable*. Cf. the familiar phrase in "Yankee Doodle."

34 10. *The Mitre Tavern*. A tavern in Mitre Court, off Fleet Street, famous for its literary associations.

35 25. *Lord Mansfield* (1704-1793), was Chief-Justice of the King's Bench.

36 4. *Macpherson*. James Macpherson, or McPherson (1738-

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1796), who professed to have found in the Highlands of Scotland fragments of ancient poetry in Gaelic, "translations" of which he published in 1762 under the title, *Fingal, an Epic Poem, in Six Books, by Ossian*. The authenticity of this work was doubted, and critics demanded a view of the original poems; but Macpherson died without disclosing the originals of his professed discoveries.

**36 28.** *The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicol's, and Hendersons*. The curious student will be interested to look up the references to these critics in the index to Hill's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

**36 35.** *Maxime, si tu vis*, etc. "Most earnestly do I desire, if you are willing, to measure my strength with you."

**37 12.** *Bentley*. Richard Bentley (1662-1742), an English critic and famous classical scholar.

**37 28.** *Taxation no Tyranny*. This work was intended as an answer to Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*.

**38 22.** *Wilson*. Richard Wilson (1714-1782), an eminent English landscape painter.

**38 30.** *Cowley*. Abraham Cowley (1618-1667).

**38 35.** *The Restoration*. The restoration (1660) of the Stuart kings, after the Commonwealth and the Protectorates of Oliver Cromwell and his son Richard.

**39 6.** *The wits of Button*. Button was the proprietor of a coffee house where political and literary wits resorted in the early part of the eighteenth century. *Cibber*. Colley Cibber (1671-1757), a second-rate English actor and playwright, appointed poet-laureate in 1730. See Boswell's *Johnson*.

**39 7.** *Orrery*. The fifth earl of Orrery, author of a *Life of Swift*. See Boswell's *Johnson*.

**39 8.** *Swift*. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), the celebrated wit and satirist. His life and works should be looked up in detail. See Johnson's sketch in *Lives of the Poets*.

**39 9.** *Services of no very honourable kind*. Savage had been associated with Pope in the publication of the *Dunciad*.

**39 19.** "*The Lives of the Poets*." See Bibliography.

**40 17.** *Malone*. Edmund Malone (1741-1812), a celebrated critic and commentator on Shakespeare.

**41 28.** *A music-master from Brescia*. His name was Piozzi,

This attachment was not so "degrading" as Macaulay makes it seem. See the brief article "Piozzi" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. For a picture of Mrs. Thrale (born Hester Lynch), afterward Mrs. Piozzi, see Hogarth's engraving, "The Lady's Last Stake."

42 8. *A solemn and tender prayer*. "Almighty God, Father of all mercy, help me by thy grace, that I may, with humble and sincere thankfulness, remember the comforts and conveniences which I have enjoyed at this place ; and that I may resign them with holy submission, equally trusting in thy protection when thou givest and when thou takest away. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, have mercy upon me. To thy fatherly protection, O Lord, I commend this family. Bless, guide, and defend them, that they may so pass through this world, as finally to enjoy thy everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."—Boswell's *Johnson*.

42 24. *The Ephesian matron*. A character in a Latin story (by Petronius), who, from grief, descended with the corpse of her husband into the vault to die, and there fell in love with a soldier sent to guard the dead. The whole story is told in the last section of the last chapter of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying*.

42 25. *The two pictures*. See *Hamlet*, Act III., Sc. iv. For some of the letters that passed between Johnson and Mrs. Piozzi see Scoone's *Four Centuries of English Letters*.

43 25. *Windham*. William Windham (1750–1810), Secretary for War in Lord Grenville's ministry.

43 27. *Frances Burney*, afterward Madame D'Arblay (1752–1840), author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, two well-known novels of the time. See Macaulay's *Essay on Madame D'Arblay*.

43 29. *Langton*. See page 30.

The first aim in studying this piece of prose, as has already been said (see page xxxvii.), must be to understand what Macaulay has written, to give these pages of his so careful a study as to be able to explain accurately and definitely any passage in it. As an aid in conducting this process and in attaining this result—a clear understanding of the text—the preceding Explanatory Notes have been added. They are intended to touch briefly on the more important references and allusions with which a pupil may be unfamiliar. But it is the pupil that must extend and

complete the work. Much has been passed over without comment, from a conviction that it is wise to force the young student to depend as little as possible on notes, and as much as possible on his own efforts, in judging what information he really needs, and how he may best secure it. However he does it, the pupil must master the text of Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* as thoroughly as he would the text of Cicero's *Oration against Catiline*. The *Life* is prescribed for actual *study*, not for *reading*, and the student must not leave it until he has gone through it word by word, allusion by allusion, sentence by sentence. He must understand exactly what Macaulay meant. That does not necessarily imply that he should know all about every character to whom Macaulay refers, but it does mean that he should know enough about the subject of each reference to understand why it was made. To assist the pupil in testing the extent and accuracy of this preliminary study, the following questions have been prepared, to which answers will not be found in the preceding Explanatory Notes. They will indicate the sort of understanding of the text that the pupil must in some way attain. A few may appear trivial; but whoever has gone conscientiously through the labor of preparing boys for college in English will realize that seemingly trivial questions are often not without value. Simple things are easily overlooked.

SPECIMEN QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT: FOR ORAL REVIEW OR WRITTEN EXAMINATION. — What does Macaulay mean by *Augustan delicacy of taste* (2 26)? Is Latin taught in England in a way to which we are not accustomed? Why *gown* (4 2)? Explain *refracted* (5 28), *registrar* (6 4), *ceruse* (6 31), *ordinaries* (9 21). Define *sycophancy* (9 28). Just what is meant by *parts* (11 13)? By *pilloried*, *mangled with the shears*, *whipped at the cart's tail* (11 27)? By *hack* (13 6)? By *Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers* (13 23)? Why *palm* (16 8)? Is *carcase* (16 17) a familiar word? What does *acidulated* mean (17 15)? Why *closet* (17 29)? What is a *turgid* style (19 15)? Comment on *are known to everybody* (19 29). What is the difference between the *authority of a Dictator* and *that of a Pope* (21 1, 2)? What is a *folio* (21 4)? What is the derivation, and what the meaning, of *lexicographer* (21 18), *etymologist* (21 29)? What is meant by *sheets* (22 35)?



By *epithet* (23 20) ? By *women are married without ever being seen* (24 12) ? Define *adjured* (26 24). To what language does *Pomposo* belong (26 32) ? What is meant by *happy conjectural emendation* (27 15) ? By *period* (28 34) ? What is the *Southern Cross* (30 30) ? Explain *quarto* (31 32). How could Johnson have an *apartment at a brewery* (32 26) ? What is a *squire* (34 32) ? Explain *Celtic* (35 1). Why is the line quoted a *detestable Latin hexameter* (36 34) ? Why *at that season* (38 28) ? What is meant by *poetasters* (39 3) ? Explain the reference in *Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists* (39 6, 7) ? What is the meaning, and what the derivation, of *anfractuositie* (44 28), and why does Macaulay use the word ?

Not even when the pupil has mastered the full meaning of the text, word for word, and sentence for sentence, is it safe to assume that he has Macaulay's ideas thoroughly in mind. That must be made certain by requiring careful summaries. The pupil should reduce the thought of each paragraph to a single sentence, should determine what are the main ideas of the whole composition, and then make a scheme of the structure. Such a plan from Macaulay's *Essay on Milton* is here reprinted<sup>1</sup> as a good example of what a thoughtful analysis of a similar piece of writing should show.

§§ 1-8. PREFATORY REMARKS. Description of a theological work by John Milton, lately discovered.

§§ 8-49. FIRST DIVISION OF THE ESSAY : MILTON'S POETRY.

§§ 8-18. First topic : Is Milton's place among the greatest masters ? Yes, for he triumphed over the difficulty of writing poetry in the midst of a highly civilized society. A discussion of the relation of poetry to civilization.

§§ 18-20. Second topic : Milton's Latin poetry.

§§ 20-25. Third topic : Some striking characteristics of Milton's poetic methods. A description of the effect produced by the peculiar suggestiveness of the words he uses. Examples, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

§§ 25-30. Fourth topic : Milton's dramatic poetry. Like the

<sup>1</sup> From Mr. Croswell's edition of Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*, in this series.

Greek drama, it has much of the lyric character. The Greek drama and *Samson Agonistes*; *Comus* and the Italian Masques.

§§ 30-47. Fifth topic : *Paradise Lost*. Parallel between Milton and Dante. A discussion of Milton's superiority in the management of the agency of supernatural beings.

§§ 47-49. Sixth topic : The sonnets.

§§ 49-87. SECOND DIVISION OF THE ESSAY : MILTON'S CONDUCT AS A CITIZEN. THE CONDUCT OF HIS PARTY ASSOCIATES. §§ 49-72. First topic : Milton's joining the party of the Parliament in 1642. §§ 49-51. Under the impressions derived from seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, many Englishmen fail to see that the Long Parliament was defending principles of government accepted by all England since 1688, and now struggling for recognition in the rest of the world. §§ 51-57. The rebellion of Parliament against Charles I. is therefore justified by a comparison, point by point, with the glorious Revolution dethroning James II. §§ 57-72. Admitting, then, the justice of Parliament's quarrel with the king, was their rebellion too strong a measure? When are revolutions justified?

§§ 72-78. Second topic : Milton's association with the Regicides and Cromwell. §§ 72-75. The execution of Charles not so very different a measure from the deposition of James. But even if one disapproves of the regicide, one may admit the necessity of defending it at that time. §§ 75-78. Discussion of Cromwell's good government compared with Parliament's betrayal of trust on one side and the Stuart misgovernment on the other.

§§ 78-87. Third topic : Milton's contemporaries classified and described. §§ 79-84. The Puritans. § 84. The Heathens. § 85. The Royalists. § 86. Milton's own character compounded of many different strains.

§§ 87-92. THIRD DIVISION OF THE ESSAY : MILTON'S PROSE-WRITINGS. His pamphlets devoted to the emancipation of human thought.

§§ 92 to End. CONCLUSION. A vision of Milton.

After a scheme of the thought has been made, in this or some other fashion equally good, the pupil should write a number of short essays, each of which should have for its object the reproduction in the pupil's own language, and on a smaller scale, of the ideas contained in one of the large divisions of the *Life*.

## CRITICAL NOTE

UNDER this heading are gathered certain detailed suggestions as to the further study of Macaulay's *Life of Johnson*. Up to this point we have considered only a single part of our work—that pertaining to the understanding of the text. The pupil must not stop here, however, nor slacken his efforts. The pleasantest part of his task remains undone. We have yet to see (1) what we can gain from a study of Macaulay's style, (2) what we can gain by considering the truth, appropriateness, or suggestiveness of Macaulay's ideas, and (3) what progress we can make, after this introduction by Macaulay, in the study of Johnson's life and times and in the enjoyment of his works and those of his contemporaries. In such matters teacher and pupils must be left largely to their own devices, but a few hints may seasonably be given under the successive heads of Rhetorical Study, Suggestive Study, and Literary Study.

*Rhetorical Study.* Rhetorical work in the preparatory schools should have simply the aim of enabling pupils to write simply, clearly, and correctly. Minute precept, the philosophy and logic of expression, detailed analysis of style—all these are subjects for college work. To write simply, clearly, and correctly is all that can reasonably be asked of a sub-Freshman. Fluency, grace, beauty, power—all these may be inculcated later. Simplicity, clearness, and correctness are the essential qualities, and no one is a better teacher of them than Macaulay. Fine critics have found fault with his style, but they cannot deny that it has proved the most successful prose style of the century. Success means something. To receive wide and long continued approbation a style must have the very best of qualities. Macaulay is an excellent model.

The student has two things to do if he would get the most out of Macaulay's style. First, he must like it and learn the "tune"

of it. That is the main thing. He should pick out the finest passages in the *Life*, read them aloud again and again, perhaps even memorize short parts of them, until he gets the "swing" of the style. Then he should choose from matters familiar to him a subject of the sort that Macaulay liked,<sup>1</sup> and try to treat it after the Macaulay fashion, reading his essay aloud with emphatic vigor to see if it has the proper ring. The process of imitation leads inevitably to *analysis*. Just how does Macaulay secure his results? he must ask himself, and that means that he and his classmates must go systematically to work to analyze Macaulay's style. The task is not a hard one. Long paragraphs, short sentences, balanced or parallel structure in sentences and paragraphs, a wide vocabulary of dignified and picturesque words—this is what his instructor will help him to find, and, having found the secret of the method, he will go on to apply it. He will choose particular typical sentences of Macaulay's and match them with similarly constructed sentences of his own on a different topic. If he can do that well, he has learned a lesson that will long stand him in good stead.

*Suggestive Study.* It will be disappointing if the pupil reads Macaulay blindly, or imitates him blindly. Macaulay is famous for expressing clearly and vigorously ideas worth thinking of. The student must keep his mind open to ideas, full of curiosity. Not only will he be impressed by the main point of the essay—the vivid delineation of Johnson's character, not only will he be thrilled with sympathy and admiration, but he will find food for reflection on almost every page. Take a single illustration from the very first paragraph. "That Augustan delicacy of taste," says Macaulay, speaking of English schoolboys. "Classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton," he continues. Evidently some English boys may actually have a delicate taste in points of Latin usage at an age when most American boys are thankful if they can stumble through Virgil or Cicero. Evidently some English boys have really a wide range of Latin literature at their command. What makes the difference? Why are we ignorant where they are wise?

<sup>1</sup>Following the excellent method outlined by Mr. E. L. Miller. See the Suggestions to Teachers and Students in his edition of Southey's *Life of Nelson* in this series.

Are the tables turned in other fields of knowledge? What is there sound and good in our own education? Such chance questionings the instructor should deliberately encourage. Few boys know how to keep their minds active as they read. Even suggestions so random as those just indicated with regard to the English system of classical education might be the beginning, in a young student's mind, of an exceedingly profitable train of thought. It is obviously impossible, however, for any editor to indicate more than the general character of such suggestive study. The whole process must be left, for the most part, to the pupil himself, who, with the encouragement of the instructor, should, from time to time, try to sum up, not Macaulay's ideas, but the results of his own thinking on matters which his study of Macaulay has suggested.

*Literary Study.* Valuable as the two kinds of training just mentioned are, they should be wholly subordinate to the study of the *Life* as an introduction to a wider knowledge and enjoyment of English literature. Luckily, the book looks two ways, opening an easy avenue on the one hand to Macaulay, and on the other to Johnson. Both were interesting men, and both belonged to interesting periods of literature. To which author and to which group the student turns his attention, it makes little difference. The main thing is that he should read—read with zest, and read with appreciation. But here also the teacher and the pupil must be left to their own devices. With interest and earnestness one cannot, in this field, go far astray—particularly in dealing with a book so full of references to the best known literary figures of the eighteenth century. Even if the student does nothing more than grow familiar with Boswell's *Johnson* and some of Macaulay's best essays, he has accomplished something that will contribute directly and in no small degree towards laying the foundations of a liberal education.



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